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The Cigarette Scandal

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by James Fallows

While idling away the hours last New Year's Eve, I was watching a documentary about Brazil on public TV. During the intervals when most other stations run commercials, this one paid its moment of homage to the oil companies, then cut to a strange aquatic scene. A team of trained dolphins was swimming around in a tank. On signal, they leaped up, one after another, and plucked burning cigarettes from the mouth of a trainer suspended over the water. My initial shock—of apprehension, that the dolphins would burn their bottle-noses—soon gave way to a shock of nostalgic recognition. So this was one of the old anti-smoking commercials! This was where they had gone. A little ditty was playing in the background, urging citizens to say "You Mind Very Much If They Smoke." The ad ended in a freeze-frame sequence as a dolphin, with an uncharacteristically vicious expression on its face, ripped a cigarette from the lips of its startled trainer.

What memories the ad called up! I sat for a moment in reveries about the anti-smoking spots that used to run on television before the Federal Trade Commission took both pro- and anti-cigarette commercials off the air in 1971. Cowboys had been laid low by racking coughs; withered old crones had rasped out "Smoking Is Sexy," between drags on a cigarette. The cancer experts thought that the genius of Madison Avenue was beginning to help them make headway against the habit.

The reflection turned sour a moment later, as I recalled some of the news I had been reading more recently in the paper. Just a few weeks earlier, doctors had started using words like "epidemic" to describe the worst cancer reports in years. The government announced in November that the death rate from cancer was going up five times faster than usual in 1975, largely because of a big boom in lung cancer. As *Time* put it in describing the report, "lung cancer must take a large share of the blame. The American Cancer Society reports that lung cancer next year will kill an estimated 65,200 men and 18,600 women—2,800 more victims than last year. Ironically, unlike other forms of the disease, lung cancer is largely preventable. At least 80 per cent of the cases appear to be the direct result of cigarette smoking."

A touch of the grotesque was added a few pages later, when, on its back cover, *Time* bade its readers adieu with a full-page ad for Tareytons—only one of several four-color spreads from the tobacco industry spaced throughout that issue. What, in the name of God, was going on here? Had the campaign against smoking really reached the silly level of leaping dolphins, while lung cancer was making people drop like flies? By what marvels of self-justifying sophistry was *Time* warning its readers about cancer on one page and turning its ad space over to the hucksters who proclaimed that L&D was "The Proud Smoke"? Was there some hidden explanation for all this that I had somehow missed?

Spurred by a perverse fascination, I looked further into the world of the cigarette and discovered that its ironies were even more ghoulish than they initially seemed. Quite a lot has happened in the five years since the FTC took the ads off television and

James Fallows is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly.

Photographs by Diana H. Walker

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the press stopped paying attention to the hazards of smoking. The high points are these:

First, more people are dying from lung cancer than ever before, and medical science keeps discovering new and more appalling ways in which cigarettes can be fatal. Second, cigarette sales are booming—up 30 per cent since 1969—and more youngsters are acquiring the habit than ever before. Third, public policy about smoking, which once tried to help smokers stop and keep kids from starting, has taken a different tack. All the clamor about smoke-free zones and protection for the non-smoker has, in effect, told those who do smoke, "Go ahead and kill yourself, you dumb asshole, but don't do it on the elevator." And fourth, the magazines and newspapers, prominent moralizers that they were about getting cigarette ads off the airwaves, have picked up virtually all the advertising money that used to go to television.

The Epidemic

Since the perils of cigarettes have been a boring topic for the press in the last few years, the recent scientific data comes as a surprise. To begin with, there have been two epidemiological developments of particularly ugly significance. The first, connected with the trend reported in *Time*, is the epidemic of lung cancer which has apparently just begun. Even though many thousands of people have quit smoking in the last ten years, more and more die of lung cancer each year. This is a perfectly predictable, statistical result of previous trends.

At the beginning of this century, when cigarettes were still an esoteric taste, the mortality rates from lung cancer were about one or two people per 100,000. Most of those who died were elderly, having developed the disease at the end of a long life; few were in their forties or even fifties. Then, around the time of World War I, more men began smoking, both in America and elsewhere in the world. For a while, there was no dramatic difference in the mortality rates. That was because lung cancer, like most other forms of the disease, requires a certain "latency period" between exposure to the carcinogen and active growth of the malignancy.

The latency period for lung cancer seems to be something like 20 years. In 1934, roughly 20 years after the smoking boom, the mortality rate from lung cancer among men was 5.3 per 100,000. By 1940 it had nearly doubled, to 9.4, and ten years later had nearly doubled again, to 19.5. Ten years after that, in 1960, the mortality rate had risen by another 90 per cent, to 36 per 100,000; by 1969, it had increased by yet another 80 per cent, to 63.

As the cancer boom picks up steam, women will play a prominent part. The authors of an article called "The Changing Epidemiology of Lung Cancer—Increasing Incidence in Women" reported in *Medical Clinics of North America* last March, "Mortality rates for men with lung cancer began rising sharply in the 1930s, approximately 20 years after significant numbers of men began smoking cigarettes. The mortality rate for women is now similar to that of men in 1930." Women smokers protect themselves, relatively speaking, by smoking fewer cigarettes each day than men, inhaling less deeply and choosing brands with less "tar"; nonetheless they are catching up. *The New York Times* reported, in its article on the cancer boom, that scientists feel it represents the "mushrooming of a long-forecasted epidemic of lung cancer among women." (Not far from that story, the *Times*, too, ran a number of enormous cigarette ads.) "Most of the increase we're seeing now is from women who took up smoking after World War II," says Donald Schopland of the government's anti-smoking organization, the National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health.

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So few people ever recover from the disease that the statisticians' debates—about whether the survival rate is one per cent or four per cent—seem more grotesque than significant. "It's a quite quick death, but it is expensive and can be very painful," says Schopland. "The cancer may spread to the pancreas or brain." The damage does not stop with the victim himself. "Eighty per cent of the families which have a premature cancer victim of this sort have severe emotional problems," says Dr. Ronald Glasser, the author of *365 Days* and a recent book about cancer. "The family's finances are ruined. The kids develop psychological problems, obesity, truant behavior, anger at their parents—you name it."

Callous as it may seem to consider it, there is even a cost that extends beyond the family. During the year it may take a victim to die of lung cancer, his medical expenses may exceed $10,000; the annual cost for treating victims of lung cancer is by some estimates as much as $7 billion. The family pays, until it can pay no more, but the expenses still go on. "Somebody has to pay for all of this, and it is you and me," Dr. Glasser says. "We pay through our insurance rates, we pay through our taxes."

This sort of epidemic, to repeat, will continue for at least another generation, no matter what we do about smoking. But the second piece of news from the statisticians, even less cheering in its implications, is that yet another generation of cancer victims may be on the rise. Last September the *American Journal of Public Health* published an article called "The Growing Epidemic: A survey of smoking habits and attitudes toward smoking among students in grades 7-12. . . ." The subtitle conveyed its gist: "The increased smoking among boys and particularly girls in a recent seven-year period is of epidemic proportions." In the region selected for study, the researchers found that the percentage of boys who smoked had risen from 21 to 30 between 1964 and 1971. Among teenage girls, the increase was even greater, from 12.8 per cent in 1964 to 25.7 per cent in 1971.

"It looks neat. . . "

A broader national study, conducted by the National Clearinghouse, differed somewhat in the details but concurred about the trend. According to this study, 18 per cent of the boys aged 15 and 16 smoked in 1974, while 31 per cent of the slightly older boys, aged 17-18, were also regular smokers. Both of these percentages were slightly higher than in 1968. Among girls, the increase had been phenomenal. In 1968, less than one per cent of the girls aged 12-14 were regular smokers; in 1974, it was nearly five per cent. For those aged 17-18, the rate rose from 18.6 per cent to 25.9.

"Nobody really knows what is going on," says Donald Schopland. "Since so much of the increase has been among girls, there is some speculation that it has something to do with the women's liberation movement. We hope to find some of the keys when we do another attitudinal study." The attitudinal studies which the government has already conducted do not provide clear-cut answers about this new epidemic of smoking, but they contain several pieces of provocative information. One is that a good many of the young smokers count on quitting later on. The vast majority of the teenagers—90 per cent, in some studies, both smokers and non-

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smokers—believe that smoking is harmful. Of the children who smoke, about half say they will *not* be smoking five years from now. These findings accord perfectly with every common-sense notion of why teenagers smoke. In that painful period of maximum awkwardness and minimum security, youngsters grab whatever mask they can in hopes of acquiring a suave, or at least not humiliating, identity before their friends. The mask may be organizational, it may consist of the right circle of friends, it may be a passion for a hobby or a sport. Often it is smoking.

In January, *The Washington Post* carried this report on students who smoke at one local high school: "They say they started to smoke cigarettes in junior high school at age 11 or 12. 'It just used to look nice,' says Bonnie, 16. 'Now it's just a bad habit.' 'It looks neat the way it comes out of the corner of your mouth,' says Peggy, 16. . . . 'I don't carry cigarettes,' says Linda, 16. 'But I go outside after lunch and somebody offers me one and it just looks so leisurely and nice.' "

October 19: *Medical progress note. Diagnosis: Lung cancer. Biopsy diagnosis: Bronchial biopsy, squamous cell carcinoma; metastatic spread to bone and liver.*

"It was just a routine physical, the doctor took a chest X-ray and saw this shadow near the top of his lung. He sent us to a thoracic surgeon who tried to be nice, but we knew. He said that Herb needed a biopsy and so we had him admitted to the hospital the next day, and they did a biopsy. It was lung cancer."

October 20: *Due to severe unrelenting bone pain, have increased Demerol. . . new bony lesions of the spine, lumbar vertebrae L1 and L2, visual on X-ray bone survey.*

"Herb took it very well. Dr. Brown said that if things went well, Herb would have six to eight months. . . . We talked and Herb said how lucky he really was to have time to put all his things in order. . . that. . . that many men don't have that. He talked of a few people he knew, businessmen, who had had heart attacks without. . . without. . . "

November 9: *Erosion of lumbar spines have continued with neurological involvement of spinal cord.*

The Victims

Most teenagers don't intend to acquire a lifelong addiction, any more than they intend to spend the rest of their lives as football players or cheerleaders. They are looking for a temporary prop and are surprised to find themselves with a permanent burden.

The attitudinal surveys reveal one other surprising fact—a class division between smokers and non-smokers. Since the release of the Surgeon General's report there has been a clear correlation between education and smoking for adults. The more education a person has, the more likely he is to have quit smoking, if he ever smoked to begin with. The same stratification is now visible in high school. Twice as many of the teenagers who held jobs smoked as those who confined themselves to schoolwork. Among boys aged 17-18, 40 per cent of those who took vocational courses smoked, compared to 20 per cent of the boys taking a "college preparatory" curriculum. In a way, it is surprising that smoking among children of the middle classes has not picked up more than it already has. For years their parents have been so terrified of losing their children to marijuana or the sirens of sexual promiscuity that they regard cigarettes almost with a sigh of relief. In terms of demonstrable physical danger, of course, cigarettes are by far the most hazardous of the group.

Apart from these statistical developments, there have been several

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Patient now has loss of rectal and bladder function; neurosurgeons consulted. Their recommendation due to patient's terminal condition is to do nothing. Patient becoming hostile; have changed pain medication from Demerol to morphine.

"It's difficult to know now what was really the hardest. I think if it would have lasted much longer, we would have really had trouble with our oldest boy; towards the end, he stopped studying and would just sit in his room. Our youngest child was first bewildered and I think angry that I was spending so much time at the hospital."

November 16: *The patient is unable to keep down any food. Have begun IV therapy, patient is becoming very withdrawn.*

"And to tell you the horrible truth, at the end I could barely bring myself to even walk into his room; don't think poorly of me, please don't, but once, just once, I didn't go. . . . I stayed home. . . he looked so terrible and tried so hard to show how it didn't hurt. . . I just stayed home and cried. . . "

—*from* The Body As Hero
by Ronald Glasser, to be published by Random House in April.

recent additions to the canon of medical horrors caused by smoking. The general catalog of diseases caused or aggravated by smoking is too long and familiar to bear repeating, but too important not to mention briefly. For at least ten years, most doctors have agreed that smokers are about ten times as likely to die of lung cancer as non-smokers; nine times as likely to die of cancer of the mouth and pharynx; six times as likely to die of emphysema and cancer of the larynx; four times as likely to die of cancer of the esophagus; and they are much more likely to die of coronary heart disease. In 1965, when only 40,000 people died of lung cancer, the Surgeon General, Dr. Luther Terry, estimated that 240,000 people would die prematurely of disorders related to smoking. If the same proportions hold today, more than half a million people will die this year because of cigarettes. This is ten times as many Americans as were killed during the entire course of the Vietnam war.

Two other items might be added. In the wave of concern about environmental and occupational carcinogens, bladder cancer has played a prominent role. It was bladder cancer which workers in dye and pesticide plants contracted and which caused the government to shut down the plants; and it was because cyclamate sweeteners, when fed in enormous doses to experimental animals, produced bladder cancers that they were removed from the market in 1969. But according to recent medical articles, *the* primary cause of bladder cancer these days is not pollutants or occupational hazards, but cigarette smoking. The assorted carcinogens present in cigarette smoke do not act solely on the lungs, but are also absorbed into the blood stream and eventually pass through the kidneys. While contained in the urine, they are stored for several hours at a time in the bladder, where they may eventually produce tumors.

The second item concerns the effects of smoking on the smoker's own offspring. Doctors have long understood that if a mother smokes while pregnant, her baby is more likely to be aborted or stillborn, and if it does survive it is likely to be smaller and weaker than if she had not smoked. Cancer is a surprisingly frequent cause of death in children—between the ages of one and 15 it kills more children than any other disease. Some doctors have speculated that the carcinogens in cigarette smoke may enter the mother's bloodstream, pass through the placenta into the infant's system, and leave the baby predisposed to cancer from the moment it is born.

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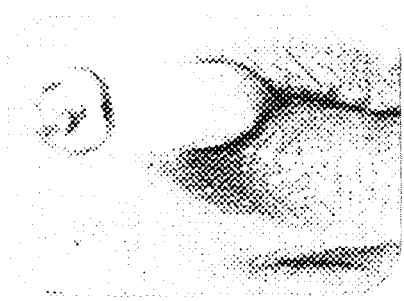
Thirty years ago, popular culture presented a distinct and quite flattering picture of the aura of a cigarette smoker. Anyone could look at the silver screen and see Bogie standing there with a cigarette dangling from his lip, the very embodiment of rough, tough worldly wisdom. When Edward R. Murrow began appearing on "See It Now," he was constantly at work with his cigarette, a cool, debonair chain-smoker. For those of a different taste, Albert Camus was hardly photographed without a Gauloise planted in the corner of his mouth. GI Joes smoked in the ranks; somewhat earlier, George Orwell had written in *Homage to Catalonia* about the camaraderie of a cigarette in the trenches. With the brilliant slogan, "Reach for a Lucky Instead of a Sweet," the advertisers equated cigarettes with attractiveness. The effect was so widespread and persuasive that the cigarette companies have been trying to recreate it ever since, with the Marlboro cowboys and the suave smokers of Benson and Hedges.

Now the members of this generation are in their late forties and upwards. If experience and logical self-interest were all it took to change behavior, they would have stopped smoking in droves, for the changes they have seen have been chilling. The two heroes most clearly identified with cigarettes, Bogart and Murrow, died one after the other, both of lung cancer. The Surgeon General's report came out in the early sixties, and soon afterwards the prevailing popular attitude began to change. Instead of thinking that smokers were chic, people began to think that smokers were stupid. When the smokers have visited their doctor, he has told them to stop for the sake of their heart, or their lungs, or their pharynx. Apart from the handful of cigarettes they savor with their morning or evening coffee, the two or three dozen others they consume each day do not even confer any real pleasure. They don't need to ask their doctor when they first see blood in the sputum, because they already know what it means. But still they have not been able to stop.

Some have, of course. The first identifiable group to do so was the doctors, whose percentage of smokers dropped from 60 to 20 per cent during the 1960s alone. But millions of other people still feel themselves imprisoned; according to some studies conducted during the late sixties, 80 to 90 per cent of the adults who smoke wish they could stop. By now, some of these people have died or developed cancers. Others may already be doomed. But a substantial number could still be helped, if only they could break the habit. Within a few weeks of the time a smoker stops, the extra risk of coronary disease decreases. Because of the years of exposure, his prospects for cancer are



harder to determine, but if a smoker makes it through ten years after quitting the habit, his chances from that point on are statistically the same as if he had never smoked.

While these smokers have been desperate to quit, the government has been fighting its gigantic "War on Cancer." Grants are granted, research conducted; viruses are hunted down in their lairs. On cancer research of this kind the government spent hundreds of millions last year. As a result of this research, a smoker who gets lung cancer has the comfort of knowing that he may survive for 18 months instead of a year. Meanwhile, a handful of small change is devoted to the two steps that could keep people alive for an extra ten years instead of an extra six months—helping smokers quit and preventing children from starting. In the whole cancer budget,

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there is virtually nothing set aside for these purposes. From a humanitarian point of view this is brutal; from a practical point of view it is wasteful. If the war on cancer is really intended to save lives, then the focus should change toward helping smokers quit and keeping children from starting.

So that there will be no mistake, I am not talking here about denying cigarettes to adults who want them, or engineering another burst of Prohibition. I am speaking only of people who do want to quit, and of what might be done to help them. Specific prescription is difficult in this area, since people smoke for so many different reasons and since cures have had such limited success. Hypnosis may work wonders for some people; for others, little habit-breaking tricks may ease the way from slow cut-back to total abstention. Some smokers may break the habit through sheer force of will. Still others, with exactly the same amount of moral rectitude, may find that when they do go cold-turkey they think of nothing else but the next cigarette they must resist. Far better, they may feel, to go on smoking than to live in that zombie state.

There may be answers to be found, however. As an initial step, we might take some of the money now spent on cancer research and use it for a serious examination of the various quitting techniques. Is there a better drug to ease the physiological addiction than those which are now prescribed? Should aversion therapy—for example, putting a person in a telephone booth and letting him smoke himself sick—play a larger part? Or hypnosis? With a clearer idea of what works and what doesn't, we might then concentrate on making this knowledge available to the people who can use it: the smokers, their doctors, both public and private anti-smoking clinics. Some of these private organizations, most notably the Schick clinics, have run up an impressive record of cures, and a public campaign against cancer should welcome their efforts rather than undercut them. But Schick now charges $450 for a cure and has little incentive either to find simpler ways to help the smoker or to treat everyone who wants to quit. The government has the money to do the research, and it has a reason to cast its net wide.

The Need for Paternalism

While a campaign against cancer is helping people quit, it should also keep youngsters from starting. Just as it makes more sense to stop people from getting cancer than to blast them with radiation once they are dying, it also makes more sense to keep people from becoming addicted than to put them through the agony of a cure. This, it will be noted, is a paternalistic notion: the state is telling people what is good or bad for them. There will be more to say about paternalism in a moment, but here we are speaking of children, and when dealing with children paternalism may be a very good thing. Parents do not let their children learn from experience in the case of electric sockets, or railroad crossings, or household poisons, and they should not do so with cigarettes. The forces that draw children toward smoking in those awkward teenage years may be only temporary, but the consequences are not. People who start smoking at age 15 are five times more likely to die of lung cancer than those who start at 25.

The burden of paternalism falls first on the parents. Of all the influences affecting a child's decision to smoke, the example of his parents is the most important. But even if parents try to dissuade their children, there are many other influences that remain beyond their control. The chic ladies of the Virginia Slims advertisements, the rugged cowboys smoking Marlboros—these and other creations of the advertising world lure their children toward the romance of the cigarette. There are other pressures as well, from school, friends, and elsewhere.

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The boundaries of parental influence suggest where the state might take a hand. One step would be to get a clearer idea of why children decide to smoke, and what incentives are most effective in stopping them. The next would be to launch campaigns—paid for, once again, out of the current anti-cancer budget—to play on the most sensitive juvenile emotions. Television may be the most influential medium for this audience, and the anti-smoking spots of the sixties, though mainly aimed at adults, illustrate the approach to be taken. Anti-smoking commercials, of course, are not only paternalism but also propaganda, and in some minds they call up visions of a mind-controlling government at work. Today cigarettes are denounced on TV; tomorrow, the Jews. This is alarming only to those who overlook the most obvious distinctions between the realm of free discussion and that of addictive poisons.

Public Choices

The two steps considered so far would pass muster under most schemes of individual freedoms and proper functions of the state. By helping people quit and steering children from an immature choice that could prove fatal, the public is only finding a more practical way, at no cost in individual liberties, toward reducing the toll from cancer. Beyond that, any public efforts against smoking run smack into debates about First Premises and theories of the state, the same debates that have cropped up elsewhere in the last few years. In San Francisco, a proposal has been debated which would require extra-high fencing along the Golden Gate Bridge. Its supporters argued that the unfenced bridge was an invitation to suicide. Prevention of accidental falls was not the issue, since the existing fence was adequate for that. Rather, the question was whether those who decided to commit suicide by leaping from the bridge should be prevented from carrying out that decision. In less dramatic fashion, the same issue lies behind the "buzzer" legislation, designed to protect drivers from any foolhardy desire not to wear their seatbelts. It lies as well behind efforts to stamp out smoking. The issue is whether the government should prevent its citizens from consciously doing themselves harm.

I believe that a distinction between public and private efforts is essential. To take an extreme conception of public powers, one might argue that the state has an absolute power to keep its citizens from harming themselves. It would outlaw smoking, forbid all drinking (as we did during Prohibition), and take steps to see that no one jumped off the bridges. Such a policy would be based on the notion that the citizen owed a special kind of loyalty to the state. Besides just paying his taxes and obeying the laws, he would be expected to deliver his productive labor—which depends on his health—for the good of the community. As Michael Walzer has phrased it, this is the duty to *live* for the state, as opposed to the more familiar duty to die for it. Such a duty might be right for a tightly knit guerrilla band or a young ideological state, but it has never been part of our public philosophy. That is why I think that the state should have no quarrel with any adult who wants to smoke, just as it should have no quarrel with those who attempt suicide.

The only quarrel the state might have with the smoker is when he violates the rights of others. This has been the battle cry of the non-smokers on their fights for smoke-free havens within airplanes and elevators, but it means something else as well. Over the course of their lives, most smokers will spend more days in the hospital, off the job, and at the doctor's than non-smokers will. Their total medical bills will be higher, and, of course, they will die sooner. The companies that insure their lives and sell them medical insurance stand to

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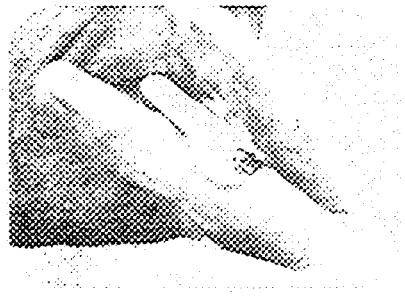
lose money on smokers. As things work out, however, it is not companies that lose but those who do not smoke. Only a handful of insurance companies offer any discount at all for non-smokers, and these are so trivial as to hardly be worth the bother. If you are 30 years old and a non-smoker, for example, Mutual of New York will knock a full 66 cents off your annual premium for each thousand dollars of your life insurance



policy. By the time you're 60, the discount soars to $2.14. It's easier for the companies to jack rates up across-the-board, and the effect of that is to make those who do not smoke subsidize those who do. Smokers who cannot afford insurance rely on the public for their medical care. They draw on these facilities more heavily than people who do not smoke, so they, too, are subsidized by non-smokers. Our public services are riddled with hundreds of indirect subsidies, but none of them can make less sense than this one.

Here we leave public duties at an end. Private responsibilities are quite a different matter. As a friend or a member of a family, I have an interest in the well-being of my friends. Though I don't want the state to prevent them from committing suicide, I will try to prevent them myself, as I might try to persuade them against smoking. Private individuals and organizations are held to a standard of conscience not expected of the government, and that is why we return now to the question of advertising. 1970 was the last year in which cigarette companies could vend their product over the airwaves. During that year the makers of the top 20 cigarette brands spent $241 million advertising their products, more than two thirds of that total going to TV. Then came the ban, and for three years the ad totals were depressed. In 1973, they had only climbed to $196 million, 20 per cent below their previous high. But by 1974 the ad total for the top 20 brands had reached $243 million, and expectations for 1975 are higher still. When inflation is taken into account, this is clearly a smaller total than before the ban; but when you consider that not a penny of it is going to TV, it means that newspapers, magazines, and the owners of outdoor billboards are having a field day. Open a copy of *Time* or *Newsweek*, *Harper's* or *Atlantic*, *New York* or *Esquire*, *Penthouse* or *Playboy*, and you will see the bright ads for Winston, Saratoga, More, and Virginia Slims. According to *Advertising Age*, newspapers and magazines have increased their take from the cigarette companies by more than 300 per cent since 1970. During that period, outlays for cigarette ads in magazines have risen from $49.5 million to $114.6 million, and in newspapers from $14.7 million to $80.5 million.

There are gradations within these advertisements, with different levels of culpability. The tobacco men claim that their ads are aimed at people who already smoke and attempt nothing more than to make them switch their brands. True enough, one sort of ad does serve that purpose. Most of the "healthy" cigarettes—the low-tar varieties like Doral, More, Vantage—make their pitch to the smoker who is getting cold feet. "With all the talk about smoking I decided I'd either quit or smoke True," says an executive type in one of the current campaigns. "I smoke True." But on the other side of the great divide are the many ads clearly designed to resurrect the shades of Bogie and Murrow and restore to smoking the romantic appeal it once had. Benson and Hedges show their smokers stubbing their extra-long cigarettes on the rear

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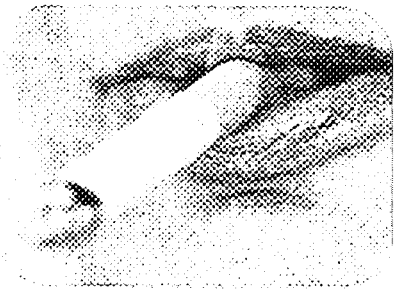
end of a girl in a bikini; *Advertising Age* calls this the "skin flick ad," and, whatever its name, its purpose is to equate smoking and sex. Winston, apparently choosing Charles Bronson as its modern Bogie, depicts bull-necked young men announcing, "I don't smoke to be like everybody else." Salem has a pair of "smoker's pride" ads. In one, a man says, "People ask me if I really enjoy smoking"; in the other, a chipper young woman asks, "Do you enjoy smoking as much as I do?" Perhaps the most obscene of them all, in view of the epidemic of cancer among women, is Virginia Slims and its well-established slogan, "You've Come A



Long Way Baby." While a feeble case might be made for the first sort of advertisement as a way of luring smokers to brands which will kill them more slowly, there is no defense at all for the second.

Both kinds of ads continue to run in our finest journals, in settings which are increasingly grotesque. *The New York Times* worries solemnly about the cancer rate and beats the drum for Winston; *Newsweek* reports on the declining public health and invites readers to meet "The Long One, Max." Under one conceivable circumstance the ads would be justified: if the papers, like Hugo Black, believed in absolute freedom of speech. This is simply not the case. Nearly every newspaper and magazine in the country reserves—and exercises—the right to censor the material advertisers place in its pages. Last fall *The Washington Post* deleted the phrase "a dirty movie that really delivers the goods" from an ad on its amusements page. (The delicious touch in this case was that the quote had come from the *Post*'s own movie reviewer.) In his book, *Legal Control of the Press*, Frank Thayer describes the censorship policies of various newspapers:

"The general principles guiding the [St. Louis] *Post-Dispatch* are to deny space for any advertisement. . . which might cause an injury to health. . . Illustrations of the type of *Post-Dispatch* rejections of advertising. . . . An eyelash and eyebrow darkener consisting of silver nitrate and pyrogallol rejected because of the possible injury to the eyes that might result to the user. . . .

"*The New York Times* policies in regard to censorship of advertising are as follows: '. . . The chief purpose of the *Times*' censorship is to protect the reader.' . . . [the *Times* forbids] objectionable medical advertising of products containing habit-forming or dangerous drugs. . . . Any other advertising that may cause money loss to the reader, or injury to health or morals, or loss of confidence in reputable advertising and honorable business, or which is regarded by *The New York Times* as unworthy.' "

Noble Soughing

The New Yorker also has its censorship rules. It accepts no advertising from the government of South Africa, it rejects patent medicines, and, according to one of its spokesmen, it frowns on products whose price level is out of keeping with the readership's assets. But *The New Yorker* is different in one other way, which is that it, along with *Reader's Digest*, is the only major publication to place a flat ban on advertisement from cigarette companies. "It happened right after the first Surgeon General's report," says Hoyt Spellman, the magazine's public relations man. "We decided in January 1964 that we would take no new business pending the final report. We continued the business we already

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had. One year later we banned it all—new and old. We felt there was no redeeming social value in cigarettes—unlike liquor, cars, and the other death-dealing instruments *The New Yorker* advertises. Even one is bad for you."

Spellman continued: "On a conservative basis, it's been estimated that we could probably have a couple of pages of cigarette ads in every issue. That would amount to about a million dollars of revenue per year."

Considering the competition, *The New Yorker* and *Reader's Digest* do deserve praise for putting their money where their mouths are, even though their performance is nothing more than the literal execution of the advertising policies of all our greater publications. One hears the noble soughing of Sulzbergers and Ochses behind *The New York Times'* ideal of "protecting the reader"; "this is not just a business, my son, it is a public trust." Unlike some other businesses, newspapers like the *Times* and the *Post*, and magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek*, have some underlying sense of moral purpose and public responsibility. They would never accept the notion that they are simply in business to make money. But for organizations so concerned about "protecting the reader," for publishers so intent on steering the public away from corruption and injustice, and for editorialists who have moralized so often about the government's perfidy in threatening the life of one man, Fidel Castro, it is grotesque, to say the least, that they are devoting so much space to the cause which kills 500,000 people every year.

Unless one assumes that the advertisers are lunatics, the reason they are advertising is that it pays off. They convince smokers to continue, and they entice new victims to start. If there are merchants of death these days, they are not the men of Honeywell but of the great tobacco industrial complex that runs from the green fields of Piedmont to the publishing offices of New York.

At this point the inevitable rejoinder is heard: but what about free speech? To begin with, this is utter hypocrisy as it applies to most publishers, since they will censor for esthetic or moral objections no matter how trivial. But there is something even more perverse about it than that. When the man in the publisher's office decides to accept a cigarette ad, deep in his mind there lurks a strange conception of his obligation to even-handedness and fair play. It shows up most clearly whenever people talk about the ban on televised ads. That was a terrible mistake, the anti-smoking forces say, because it removed the stop-smoking spots along with the industry's own ads. A Justice Department official named B. C. Wilson, to choose one example of many, has proposed that we let the cigarette ads back on TV so that we can regain the beneficial effect of the anti-smoking spots.

'Fire!'

Broadcasting is a different business than publishing; since a network is little more than a franchised money-making machine, using public airwaves, the public can set stricter terms for what does and does not appear than it can for the press. But the logic of Wilson's proposal lies close to our publishers' hearts. You have to give everyone a chance, they tell themselves; I may disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to buy my space to say it. So if you're giving cigarettes a hard time in your news columns, then it is only fair to let them reply in the ads.

Now, there is certainly a place in this world for free speech, equal time, and letting all sides be heard. It would be wrong to give the Democrats ads, but deny them to the Republicans; to let Ford advertise without GM; or even to run news reports about oil spills without letting Mobil or Exxon buy their minute's worth of rebuttal. But somewhere there is a line which

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separates these political disagreements from unequivocal menaces to the public health and safety. No serious student of free speech has claimed that anything besides *political* speech has an absolute privilege; similarly, no serious student has claimed that anyone has a right falsely to yell "Fire!" in a crowded theater—which is the kind of threat we are discussing here.

The papers offer no free speech or equal time to white slavers, for example, nor to dope pushers or contract murderers. Granted, these services are illegal, but the problem with finding proper analogies for cigarette advertising is that no other legal product comes close to matching the danger of cigarettes. They cause more cancer than radiation, pollution, or any other known cause; they kill more people than criminals, wars, auto accidents, and domestic quarrels put together. I do not deny any smoker his right to smoke, but I challenge anyone to deny that cigarettes are the major public health menace in this country—indeed in all of the Western world.

When *[More]* ran a full-page ad for Marlboros in its December 1975 issue, it demeaned itself as certainly as if it had sold that space to a gang rape club or a Mafia recruiter. No one is forcing *[More]*, or anyone else, to take these ads; they will not offend any serious notion of fair play if they turn them down. Publications are not public utilities, bound to serve any random client off the street. When a publisher decides to present a product to his readers, he puts his name behind that product, at least to the extent of saying that it is worthy of his readers' consideration. And when the publishers decide to put their names behind cigarettes, how can anyone believe their protestations of prudence and public responsibility? They have sold out. And, seriously, their employees have not bothered to complain. In the past decade, an important idea has grown up about the relationship between organizations and the individuals they employ. When the company is doing something bad, the employees complain. If it is bad enough, they back up the complaint with the threat to quit. This might not work at the local car dealership or the *Manchester Union-Leader*, but publishers like Katharine Graham and Punch Sulzberger, who place high price on the appearance of public responsibility, would be least able to resist serious pressure from their staff on a moral point such as this. Yet the idea seems not to occur to anyone involved.

Hypocrites

The sad thing is that the publications are selling themselves so cheap. Certainly there are some groups who could not survive if the cigarette industry folded. The tobacco growers are the most obvious case, and if a successful war on cancer means hard times for the farmers, then the public has a responsibility to find new ways for them to use their skills. A few publications rely so heavily on cigarette ads that they might not survive a boycott. Of the major national magazines, *New Times* seems the main entrant in this category. By my count, 45 per cent of its four-color advertising in the last half of 1975 came from the tobacco industry. (It's "my count" instead of their figures because *New Times* was not eager to discuss this question.) For the majority of the publications, this is hardly a question of economic survival. The *Times* and the *Post*, *Time* and *Newsweek*, could get along for years without cigarette ads, as they did for years before the TV ban created the current bonanza. For most of them, taking cigarette ads is not a matter of *making* a profit, but only of maximizing it. The extra five or ten per cent this adds to their revenues comes at an enormous cost in hypocrisy, and, let us say it outright, contempt for human life. Everything else they say will be cheapened until they stop. ■

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Jimmy Carter: Kennedy or Kefauver?

We were wondering which of the 1976 Democratic candidates was doing the kind of early-bird hard work that produced the 1960 Kennedy, 1964 Goldwater, 1968 Nixon, and 1972 McGovern nominations. So we asked reporters we respected in New Hampshire, Iowa, Florida, and Oregon to take a look at what was going on in their states. Henny Willis of the Eugene Register-Guard *said Fred Harris had the most workers and Morris Udall the best organization in Oregon. The rest found that Jimmy Carter was the man doing the early work. Here are their reports:*

New Hampshire

by Tom Ferriter

Of the few New Hampshire voters who had heard of Jimmy Carter six months ago, still fewer gave his presidential chances much serious thought. But when he visited New Hampshire to cajole small groups of prospective workers, some key people were listening.

One of them was Bob Fennelley, a robust state senator from the industrial city of Dover. Fennelley met Carter and liked what he heard about restructuring the federal government to make it more efficient without abandoning the ideals of the New Deal and the Great Society. It was Fennelley's taste for color that put the Carter campaign on the political map in New Hampshire for many Democratic leaders. To drum up interest in the pious Southern Baptist candidate, Fennelley organized a "Mediterranean Night" in Dover last October—complete with booze and an oldish, somewhat overweight belly dancer—that surprisingly drew 500 people, even in the absence of the candidate himself.

"It was," remarked a slightly embarrassed Carter campaign aide in Concord, "a little long on belly dancing and a little short on politics," but the affair grabbed some attention, raised a little money, and drummed up considerable local interest in Jimmy Carter.

But there is more than belly dancing going on in the Carter campaign. As early as mid-December, Carter volunteers had knocked on more than 10,000 doors in Dover, Manchester, and other Democratic strongholds. In January, a planeload of 100 middle-aged Georgians journeyed North to

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tell the Yankees what a great governor Carter had been and what a great President he would be. The "peanuts," as they came to be called by envious staff workers for other candidates, had paid their own way.

Carter aides were saying by early January that the door-knocking was demonstrating some Carter support, and considerable name recognition—a big plus in a heavily stocked Democratic field that has yet to sort itself out. But one problem this year has been voter hostility to the doorstep organizing tactics that worked so well in the past. Organizers complain that many voters don't want to know anything at all about any of the new faces in the Democratic party.

Still, Carter himself has been an effective organizing weapon. Keeping to a murderous schedule of personal appearances in his visits here, Carter easily leads, in sheer numbers and quality of voter contact, all other Democrats running in New Hampshire.

Laurence Belair, a state representative from the booming town of Salem on the Massachusetts border, was almost ready to go to work for Indiana Senator Birch Bayh when he met Carter.

"He was extremely persuasive," Belair says. "I consider myself a liberal on most issues, but not on government waste and spending. Carter is the only one talking about these issues, and I think they're the ones people want to hear about."

Like Fennelley, Belair is a local organizer of considerable abilities, and his loss was sorely felt in the Bayh camp when he enlisted in the Carter campaign.

There remain some notable gaps in the Carter organization, despite its success in building a competitive campaign out of what seemed to many a futile exercise only a few months back. For instance, Carter still has no organization to speak of in Keene, and has been unable to mount much of an attack in the Hanover-Lebanon area. Both are sizeable Democratic outposts and cannot be written off.

Of all the Democrats running here, however, Carter has made the most remarkable showing so far. "Carter has definitely done the most impressive job building an organization here," says state Democratic chairman Laurence Radway, "if only because it's so unlikely for a southern boy to come up here and become a serious candidate."

Florida

by John McDermott

Only three candidates—Wallace, Jackson, and Carter—are making full-scale campaign efforts for a share of the 81 delegates which Florida will send to the Democratic convention. Each is depending largely on volunteer workers to handle the nuts and bolts of the campaign.

Perhaps the most impressive organization is that of Carter, a little-known man 12 months ago, who now has a chance to cut deeply into the Wallace support. As a result, Carter has been more successful than the other candidates in attracting the young and eager volunteers.

Furthermore, while other major candidates were discounting Florida, virtually conceding the state to Wallace, Carter was out beating the bushes of North Florida, where he has acceptability as "a South Georgia peanut farmer," and making frequent visits to the big cities. His ability to address Latin-American political gatherings in Miami and Tampa also has proved beneficial in lining up

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volunteer workers.

Early organizing has made Carter a rallying point for anti-Wallace voters. Hugh Lalor, a politically wise, retired business executive living in Boca Raton, summarized it with this observation: "Jimmy Carter may not be my first choice, but he is an acceptable choice and the only man who has a chance against Wallace in Florida. So I'll probably be voting for him."

The Jackson organization views Carter as its chief threat in Florida. Insiders figure Wallace will win the state overall, and running second to Wallace would not be any severe jolt nationally to Senator Jackson's campaign. Running behind Carter, however, could be a very upsetting matter.

Carter's campaign got its biggest reward in mid-November when an organized effort by his volunteer workers and his own personal appeal gave him a landslide victory in a straw ballot at a state Democratic convention. Although all the presidential candidates were invited to the three-day conclave at Orlando, only Carter and Governor Milton Shapp of Pennsylvania accepted. Some 1,400 delegates attended from Florida's 67 counties, with special representation from such groups as organized labor, Democratic women's clubs, and Young Democrats.

The Carter organization correctly assessed the impact the straw vote would have nationally, and the troops, dominated by hard-working, youthful volunteers, worked on uncommitted delegates and successfully built up an impressive array of support. The results were duly noted by political reporters from the television networks, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Miami Herald*, and other media.

When the votes were counted, Carter had won a lopsided victory with 697 votes—a 67-percent margin. Shapp finished a surprise second. But his total was only 60 votes. Wallace polled a meager 57, despite a last-minute but poorly organized effort by his supporters at the convention. Jackson finished fourth with 46 votes.

The boost given the Carter campaign undoubtedly caused both Jackson and Wallace to alter their own plans for Florida. Suddenly, they seemed to realize Carter had been underestimated. Wallace, who had planned to confine his campaign to a few taped television shows, decided he must make a series of personal appearances in key areas of the state. Jackson's strategy had been focused on the six congressional districts around Miami and Tampa. He shifted gears and launched a statewide effort.

Aside from the Carter threat, Wallace is finding that he must try to stop defections which stem from past failures nationally and the paralysis of his lower body from the 1972 assassination attempt. Joe Mosier, from rural Nassau county in North Florida and a long-time Wallace backer, now is wearing a Carter button. Asked by reporters why the switch, Mosier put it simply and succinctly: "Because I want a winner."

Iowa

by James Flansburg

The 50 friends and relatives who received a Christmas card from Dale and Rita Figgins of State Center, Iowa, last year could hardly believe their eyes.

It was a color photograph of the couple, wearing hats emblazoned with the name of Jimmy Carter, lapel cards proclaiming the name of Jimmy Carter, and holding a hand-lettered sign that said "Jimmy Carter for

James Flansburg is a reporter for the Des Moines Register and Tribune.

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President."

Written across the bottom of the card was this message: "This is to wish you a Merry Christmas and to put in a plug for Jimmy Carter."

It had the trappings of a campaign gimmick but wasn't. The former Georgia governor's Iowa campaign workers never tried to peddle the story or a reproduction of the card to the newspapers.

In fact, Rita Figgins seemed slightly embarrassed when a reporter asked her about it, because State Center is a Republican town in a Republican county. "It was just something a little different for Christmas," she said.

Once started, however, she had no hesitation about telling of her Carter partisanship ("I'm such a Carter fan") and her efforts to persuade her friends and neighbors to support him.

So how did Rita and Dale Figgins end up with their Jimmy Carter Christmas cards?

Carter was scheduled to speak at a Marshall County fundraiser last fall and Tim Kraft asked the county chairman, Sherry Sanders, to get someone to drive the candidate's car. She asked Ed and Marilyn Davis, who live across the street from Rita and Dale Figgins, and the Davises obliged. At the meeting that night, Rita and Dale Figgins met Carter.

"He just blended in with the crowd," said Rita Figgins. "He was so friendly—he didn't have that standoff way about him, where he talked only to the big shots."

Tim Kraft thinks that Carter's punctuality has helped him immensely with Iowa audiences. "People expect a candidate to be late but they don't like it," he said, "and Jimmy tries never to be late."

"What we've tried to do," he continued, "is have a reception that lasts about two hours and have Jimmy greet them all as they come in. Then a ten-minute speech, followed by a long question and answer session. From the lists you get there, you canvass as soon as possible, and if there's someone you really want, you have Jimmy ask them—either in person or in a follow-up phone call."

About two hours of Carter's campaign day are given over to phone calls of this sort. And by word of mouth, Carter's Iowa people have learned that Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter answer their own phone down in Plains, Georgia. Charlie Hammer learned it when he called and got Rosalynn; someone else in Sioux City learned it when she called to ask Jimmy to send a get-well card to a sick friend and got Jimmy.

Ed Davis, a farm equipment dealer who hasn't been active in politics since the Kennedy campaign of 1960, was also hooked into the Carter campaign during that Marshall County visit last fall—even though he originally intended to do nothing but a favor for Sherry Sanders. "I've never been so impressed by a person in all my life," said Davis. "I thought those kind of people weren't in existence any more."

Interviews with Mr. Davis and Mrs. Figgins produced no mention of issues whatsoever. The closest approach: "I don't think he is the orator that some are," said Mrs. Figgins. "He doesn't pound his fist and make jokes—but he is sincere."

Variations of this story repeated hundreds of times give you the picture of the Carter organization in Iowa.

Experience has shown that, provided his party did not control the presidency, the candidate who got out the earliest and worked the hardest received his party's nomination from 1960 to 1972. But remember that in the two preceding campaigns, Estes Kefauver was the early bird and Adlai Stevenson the nominee. It should also be remembered that our sample consists of but four of the 50 states. Still, we did not select these states carelessly, and the story that emerges from them is an impressive tribute to Jimmy Carter. ■

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Memo of the Month

PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATIONS

[Determination of August 5, 1975]

Eligibility of Fiji To Purchase Defense Articles and Defense Services Under the Foreign Military Sales Act, as Amended

[Presidential Determination No. 76-1]

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, August 5, 1975.

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 3(a)(1) of the Foreign Military Sales Act, as amended, I hereby find that the sale of defense articles and defense services to the Government of Fiji will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace.

You are directed on my behalf to report this finding to Congress.

This finding, which amends Presidential Determination No. 73-10 of January 2, 1973 (38 FR 7211), as amended by Presidential Determinations No. 73-12 of April 26, 1973 (38 FR 12799), No. 74-9 of December 13, 1973 (39 FR 3537), No. 75-2 of October 29, 1974 (39 FR 39863), and No. 75-21 of May 20, 1975 (40 FR 24889), shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

Gerald R. Ford

[FR Doc.75-22681 Filed 8-22-75;2:53 pm]

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A Rare Resignation in Protest: Nat Davis and Angola

by Roger Morris

It surfaced quietly and, aptly, with a little diplomatic lying, swallowed whole. You could imagine how it went by reading that first story in *The Washington Post.* The *Post*'s State Department ace, Murrey Marder, checks with his seventh floor contacts close to Henry. Say, there's this rumor going around that Nat Davis is leaving as Assistant Secretary for Africa, Marder begins. Why, as a matter of fact, admit Henry's men, old Nat has decided to bail out for the good of the Service. All that back-stabbing by the Africans and the liberals just because he was in Chile at a bad time; can't do his job; hell, as Henry's always saying, how can anyone govern in this town any more with all the mistrust and suspicion. Nat's a good soldier, though; not *his* fault; we'll take care of him; a nice quiet embassy, someplace like Switzerland.

So on September 1, 1975 the *Post* reported from "authoritative sources" that Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Nathaniel Davis, 50-year-old career officer, would resign his post after only five months, "plagued by African suspicions that linked him to CIA operations in Chile" (where he had been ambassador during the overthrow of the Allende regime). Davis was discreetly stepping aside because the controversy had "deeply compromised his ability to be effective." Davis still enjoyed the "confidence" of the State Department, added the *Post*, duly following the cover story it had been fed. It was now "expected" that he would get a

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proper reassignment somewhere beyond the political sniping, perhaps Switzerland.

And sure enough, within weeks President Ford announced Davis' appointment to Bern. The new ambassador was swiftly confirmed, sworn in, and seemed about to pass almost unnoticed back into the smug, high-fringe-benefit oblivion of the Foreign Service.

Then, on December 14, *The New York Times* told the world that Nat Davis had been an unsung rebel, even hero, all the while. With the Administration under heavy fire for its recently exposed covert arms aid to factions in Angola, the *Times* quoted new sources, saying that, in fact, "Davis resigned because he believed the policy [in Angola] was utterly wrong." What had looked like a routine political casualty was now apparently the first high-level resignation-in-protest in the State Department in nearly two decades. The effect, on those generally wary of post-Vietnam entanglements and long assaulted by an air of cynical irresponsibility in foreign affairs, was gratifying to the point of elation. "It's good to know," said one senator disillusioned by the recent CIA revelations, "that we do have men in government who put conscience first." "At least somebody got the lesson of Vietnam," concluded a congressman. "Davis is going away with the respect of a lot of people up here on the Hill." "You'd have to say," observed a young foreign service officer, "that it was an act of principle." And to journalist Peter Lisagor, reflecting on the great events of the year, Davis' reported dissent on Angola qualified as "the best advice of 1975."

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Davis was an unlikely rebel. His 28-year career in many respects had been a model of the conformity, patronage, and luck by which a chosen few foreign service officers levitate to the top of their profession. After a precocious A.B. from Brown University at 19 and World War II service as a Navy ensign, Davis joined the Foreign Service and had conventional early assignments as a junior officer in Prague, Florence, and Rome. In 1953 he returned to Columbia and Middlebury for the Service's quickie Russian language and "area" training. A year later, bureaucratically certified as an expert on the Soviets, he was in the Moscow embassy. Following Moscow were four obscure years on a desk at the State Department, a Ph.D. at Tufts' Fletcher School, then a routine assignment to Caracas. By 1961, after 14 years in the Service, Davis' greatest asset was specialized training in an area that was fast becoming overcrowded. Despite his experience and education he had advanced only three grades, the last promotion, to FSO Class 3, having taken seven years. As with the vast majority of his fellow officers, his career seemed fixed, even at the age of 36, in the long, careful dance from slot to slot, promotion to promotion, destined to end in quiet Washington retirement amid the exotic carpets and brassware, the insiders' gossip, club lunches, and handsome pension that mark the spent diplomatic life.

Then in 1962 Davis got the first of what would be a string of lucky breaks: breaks due in part, say those who've worked with him, to his ability, but probably more often to sheer circumstance. Having impressed Peace Corps officials in Caracas, he was called back to Washington and detailed to the new agency, where he quickly acquired both a reputation and powerful political patrons. "Nat was a valuable find for the Peace Corps," remembered an official associated with him and Director Sargent Shriver. "The place then was full of these wild-eyed Kennedy amateurs, and here was this cool fellow who knew his way around the bureaucracy and was enthusiastic at the same time." Also evident in his Peace Corps experience was a quality which Davis would project in other assignments and which, as he surely knew after a few years in the Foreign Service, was singularly conducive to bureaucratic advance: a compliant, make-no-waves loyalty to the policy at hand. "I think Nat was appreciated by Shriver and his people above all as a professional," explained another colleague, who saw Davis at the Peace Corps "as someone who would do what he was told, would go where he was sent." At any rate, out of Davis' Peace Corps detail came promotion to FSO-2 in scarcely two years, and in 1965, at only 40, appointment by Lyndon Johnson as chief of mission at the U.S. legation in Sofia, Bulgaria.

'Corridor Image'

In the three years since his Caracas tour as a middle-grade officer, Davis had acquired no special diplomatic skill or seniority to propel him so abruptly ahead of hundreds of his fellow foreign service officers with similar careers. But he had brushed against influential Democrats like Shriver and Bill Moyers (who was deputy director of the Peace Corps before moving to the White House), had made the most of it by providing the loyal, dependable service such patrons need in the Washington shark-tank, and was now reaping the rewards. This, of course, is a common process in government, or in any large organization. When it works for a non-career official—say a Moyers taken under the wing of a Johnson—it squirts the beneficiary briefly to the rarified levels of government and then, eventually, out into the private world, where the Washington reputation gives an initial boost, but no permanent job insurance. For a career diplomat like Davis, however, the conventions of the Service in such cases are likely to be more comforting—and more per-

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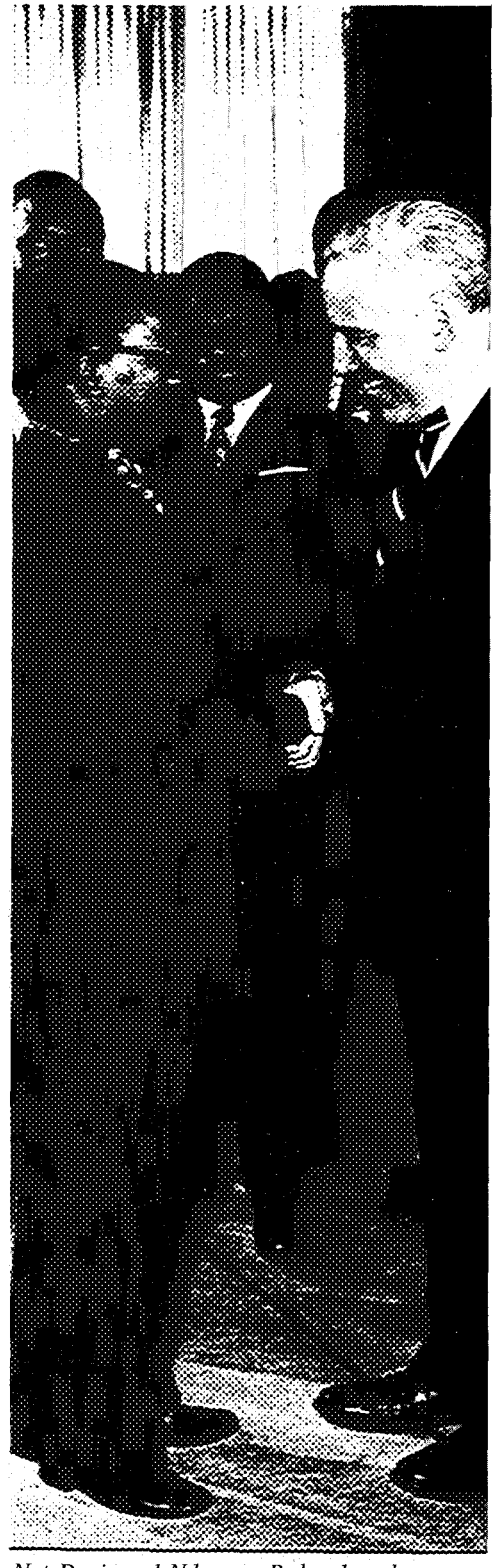
ilous to the public interest. However he got there, once he has presided over a mission, the foreign service officer is at a kind of sacred pinnacle. In an isolated little bureaucracy ruled by status and appearance rather than substance, he is presumed to have made it largely because he made it. By some corollary of the Peter Principle, he then becomes ineligible for lesser assignments and presumptively qualified for further high positions, provided age or political enemies don't force retirement for equally arbitrary reasons. In 1965, as Davis left for Sofia, he had entered this special category, never to return to the ranks, his "corridor image" in the State Department established as a bright, safe comer.

There was a brief blow to his career soon after his arrival in Bulgaria, when his involvement in an automobile accident, in which a pedestrian was killed, forced his recall. But whether by the continuing patronage of Moyers, as some of his colleagues believe, or by the convention of status described above, his recovery was fast and impressive. He was reassigned as Walt W. Rostow's assistant for Soviet affairs on the prestigious National Security Council staff at the White House, where he interpreted hot-line messages for LBJ during the 1967 Middle East war. He was soon promoted to FSO-1. As the Johnson Administration drew to a close, Rostow reportedly tried to obtain for Davis, as for other senior career officers on his staff, a suitable ambassadorial appointment—another well-established if lesser-known tradition of foreign policy politics.

Time for the Democrats was running out in 1968 when the U.S. ambassador to Guatemala was assassinated by terrorists. According to several sources, Davis went personally to then-Under Secretary Nicholas Katzenbach and volunteered for the job. "Nick was impressed," said a former Katzenbach aide. "We didn't know much about Davis, but he looked as good as anybody else, and it



Nat Davis and Ndagano Bulumba, charge d'affaires from Zaire, at Davis' swearing-in.

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wasn't exactly the most sought-after post." Some of his colleagues now see this gesture, unusually bold by Foreign Service standards, as early evidence of Davis' personal bravery and devotion to the Service. Others, more cynical, view it as the calculated gamble of a man a little desperate to retrieve his career. (In fact, the Guatemala appointment was genuinely dangerous, and there is no reason to doubt Davis' bravery.)

Davis was appointed to Guatemala in November 1968, taking him out of Washington and possibly out of the reach of political retribution. He stayed for three years of quiet, reportedly courageous, service, until the Nixon Administration asked the State Department for an ambassador who knew both Latin America and the Communists to deal with the obstreperous regime of Chile's Salvador Allende. Davis became U. S. ambassador to Chile.

Kissinger's Man

Davis' role in the sordid overthrow of Allende is a tangled and important story all its own, with serious implications for U. S.-Latin relations, the integrity of the Foreign Service, and, of course, the issue of CIA intervention. It seems clear he knew about much, if not all, the covert meddling, silently watched the lying about it to the American public and Congress, and at the least was the dutiful executor of one of the most dubious policies ever contrived. But what is relevant here is that for Davis the Chile tour seems to have been both grandly rewarding in career terms and personally frightening. For the first time in a quarter century of government work, he found his name publicly linked with responsibility for a very controversial policy.

Unlike his predecessors in China a generation earlier, Davis was neither purged nor demoted. On the contrary, his Chile service, coupled to his past reputation, further advanced his career. When the new Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, asked his Foreign Service assistant in the Vietnam peace negotiations, William Sullivan, for names of reliable people for the highest jobs in Foggy Bottom, Sullivan reportedly recommended Nat Davis in the first rank. "Henry was told he was one of the best FSOs, if not *the* best," said one source. "We knew from Chile," said another source, "that Davis was somebody who could follow orders." To the extent that this was Kissinger's initial image of Davis—and several witnesses agree it was—the recommendation must have been especially persuasive. No Secretary of State in history ever took office with more privately and publicly expressed contempt for the bureaucracy, or with more enemies in the Department. Davis' record of discretion and obedience in Santiago had no doubt impressed the suspicious and cynical new Secretary as much as Davis' reputed abilities.

Whatever the precise mix of motives, Davis was brought back to Washington to be Director General of the Foreign Service. Though not a policy job in a direct sense, it was at the time a key position, bearing on senior assignments and other administrative issues that can often shape diplomacy behind the scenes as much as options papers and intelligence reports. There are mixed reviews about Davis' work as Director General. Defenders say he did as much as he could, given Kissinger's iron grip and indifference to administration. His critics charge he was a mere caretaker at a moment when there was both the opportunity and urgent need for bureaucratic reform. Perhaps the most telling verdict is that when Kissinger looked last spring for a new Assistant Secretary for African Affairs—a job in which, as one official put it, "Henry needed his own man"—he reached for Nat Davis.

Inside the State Department, at least, the bureaucratic signal was unmistakable. Despite the legendary incompetence of the African bureau and Kissinger's studied lack of interest in

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Africa, the continent did have potentially awkward problems, and a small but noisy liberal constituency at home, including some influential black Democrats watching from Capitol Hill. If Kissinger were to pursue serious matters in Moscow, the Sinai, or Gerald Ford's White House without worrying about the minor annoyances, he needed "his own man" to watch over Africa. "He's the only Assistant Secretary who can declare war before anybody notices," Dean Rusk said of one of Davis' predecessors, recognizing the job's paradoxical insignificance and power. Rusk promptly appointed the most timorous, inert foreign service officer he could locate. By all accounts, it was in very much the same spirit that, in the early months of 1975, Kissinger selected Davis, whose record, however impressive, lacked any meaningful experience or knowledge regarding African affairs. No one anticipated at the time that it would be Kissinger who would seem prone to getting into a war unnoticed, and his hand-picked, custodial Assistant Secretary who would decide that Africa wasn't quite worth the trouble.

'Something Happened'

As happens so often to people submerged in organizations, too little of Nat Davis the human being filters through the record of the successful civil servant. The sum of others' impressions—and my own recollection of him when we worked together on the National Security Council Staff in 1967-68—is of a generally ordinary bureaucrat, an unremarkable Foreign Service everyman, sometimes cast in remarkable situations. His colleagues, those who knew him abroad as well as in Washington, recall him with the usual variety of opinion, both "pompous" and "self-effacing," "superficial" and "wise." I saw him in many ways as a physical as well as psychological caricature of the middle-aged foreign service officer. There was the ever-present paunch, the greying temples, the careful diction, the maddeningly ponderous, elliptical phrasing in which our diplomats really talk as they write. Eight years ago, at least, before Chile and Angola, there was about him that mixture of ambition and complacency common to his profession. Complacency frequently clothes a private disillusionment and self-deprecation, the inner truth discovered by many foreign service officers too late, after the kids are in college and the mortgage payments are too high, that most of their jobs, even the coveted ambassadorships, really don't matter very much, that the apprenticeship and the little indignities, from the personnel system to the wives of superiors, may be unending. Ambition in this world survives largely in the form of caution, and often also in obsequiousness. Not far underneath the controlled surface, one suspects, there is a sizeable and natural rage at the system, and at oneself.

Like all but an extraordinary few of his peers, Davis was in some measure a creature of the bloat and oppression of the organization. To him, as to most of the Foreign Service, "something happened," just as it had to Joseph Heller's character. The sad results were more clearly etched with Davis than either the cause or the exact process. The major force in his life was the random caprice of organizational politics, in its preference for the available man. His career was studded with accidents of timing. What "happened" was that he had been there when he was needed—by his Peace Corps patrons appreciative of the "professional" when they found one in Caracas, by the Democrats who needed to get Rostow's boys their jobs and an ambassador to Guatemala, and not least by Henry Kissinger, who needed a few safe careerists to keep the lid on while he conducted the important policies.

The lessons of that process could hardly have been lost on its beneficiary. Davis had more reason than most foreign service officers to observe the canons of the Service—the

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supreme importance of reputation and image whatever the reality, the prospects for personally surviving any disaster if you positioned yourself carefully and stayed cool, and, above all, that first bureaucratic commandment to do whatever you do indirectly, quietly, untraceably if necessary, ultimately beyond public view, where policy and careers are really decided.

All that bureaucratic background helps explain in part both how and why Davis dissented as the Ford Administration willfully blundered into a highly visible "covert" intervention in Angola in the summer of 1975. Yet the irony is that this same culture of the State Department bureaucracy also made Davis the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The Angola Decision

Clouding every bureaucratic battle of leaks such as that surrounding the Angola policy and Davis' resignation, there is inevitably a *Rashomon* quality: reality seen dimly, if at all, through the conflicting interests, selected documents, and selective memories of the participants and their advocates. But at least an outline of events and positions seeps through in this case, enough to impart a disturbing ambiguity to what so many have celebrated. By most accounts, the CIA money began going to Angola in January 1975, some three months before Davis took over the African bureau. Holden Roberto, one of the Angolan factional leaders, had been on a $10,000 yearly dole during the 1960s until the Nixon Administration, for a variety of reasons, stopped in 1970 both that aid and the matching help to the other side, the Portuguese counter-insurgency forces. ("We were just keeping our hand in on both sides," a former official explained.) But in January, in anticipation of independence and Roberto's factional strife with a competitive guerrilla group, the stronger, more leftist Popular Movement, the CIA recommended and got some $300,000 for its old client. The decision was "routine," as one source described it, made with the "clearance" of the African bureau. Davis was briefed on the renewed arrangement with Roberto, and reportedly registered no opinion on the subject when he took office in April.

By late May, officials say, the African bureau had conducted its own "routine" review of the events in Angola, where the Portuguese withdrawal was obviously leading to trouble. The review concluded with a memo to Kissinger from Davis that the situation was "unstable" and that the U. S. should adopt, as one source worded it (with authentic flavor of the genre), "basically a wait-and-see posture." Again, there was no reference to the $300,000 already supplied Roberto, or to the mounting bureaucratic sentiment already visible "down the river" (as one foreign service officer alluded to the CIA) to increase the U. S. covert investment in the approaching scramble for power among the Angolan factions.

The issue was joined in June when the CIA formally recommended a multi-million dollar clandestine aid package to both Roberto and Jonas Savimbi, leader of the third faction. It was at this juncture, according to sources, that Davis wrote two detailed memoranda to Kissinger, not the "steady stream" of protests later described by *The New York Times*. Nor was the substance of those memos quite what would be later leaked to the *Times* as a description of Davis' position. The press account had Davis emphasizing three arguments: that the U. S.-backed factions were ineffective; that the probable failure would embarrass Zaire's Mobutu and Zambia's Kaunda, old U. S. clients acting as middlemen for Washington in the covert aid; and that the whole effort put the U. S. too close to racist South Africa, which was backing the same factions and whose troops were actually in Angola. Reliable official sources indicate, however, that though

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Davis' memos discussed these points and more in general terms, the central thrust of his recommendation was not so much that the policy was mistaken, but that it would "get out." "He stressed that you just couldn't hide an investment of that size, especially in a poor African country," explained one high official.

It was, of course, a logical concern for a foreign service officer who had watched several less-conspicuous millions of covert dollars in Chile come screaming into the headlines to the deep embarrassment of his mission. It also had elements of a traditional bureaucratic ploy, such as happens when the State Department wants to oppose the proposed exploits of a bare-chested CIA or Pentagon without seeming less manly. There's nothing wrong with being tough, whispers the argument, it just isn't practical with all these losers (a touch of hard-headed racism), and it'll only burn us (*you* personally, the decision-maker reads).

The fatal problem was that this approach—for which bureaucratic convention and the Chile experience had prepared Davis so well—was the least effective argument he could have made to Kissinger under the circumstances. An argument on the perils of exposure missed the main political and intellectual point, such as it was, of the Angola policy: Kissinger's use of the African civil war as a demonstration to both the Russians and the U. S. Congress that Washington's post-Vietnam diplomacy had not lost its fangs. "Moving in Angola was necessary to keep the Soviets honest," said one high official, "but we also had to find out if we could still run a foreign policy with this Congress." Whatever the merits of that approach to events in Angola (and they are admittedly hard to find), it was, by several accounts, a motive made caustically clear by Kissinger within the government early in the decision-making process last winter and spring. "We're not going to submit to the breast-beaters," he reportedly told one staff meeting, which included Davis. It is also entirely consistent with the Secretary's public defense of the policy in recent weeks. This policy clearly rested on a certain belligerent lack of concern about the CIA intervention "getting out." Addressed to that mentality, Davis' strictures on publicity tended to have, as one official put it, "all the force of a wet noodle."

One Chile Too Many

But this misreading of Kissinger's taste for far-flung demonstrations in the southern African bush was probably the least of Davis' problems in mounting an effective dissent inside the State Department. Bureaucratically, by last summer he seems to have been in an all but untenable position for reasons that had nothing to do with American interests in Angola. First, Kissinger had reportedly come to a rapid disillusionment with his new Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, much as he had with Davis' predecessor, Donald B. Easum, now ambassador to Nigeria. Officials talk vaguely about "poor administration" and Davis being "a disaster." Kissinger has testified secretly to a House committee (and since told several people privately) that the African bureau under Davis deliberately withheld information from higher officials lest policies supported by the bureau be changed. But *that* charge, as Kissinger well knows, is so banal in foreign policy that firing the guilty on those grounds would soon decimate the Service, not to mention having to find a new Secretary of State. In any event, several sources claim that Davis was "in trouble with Henry" even before the historic memos on Angola. By this account, the dissent thus came to Kissinger from a man he already judged critically on general principles.

Worse, added to this was a grotesque Catch-75. Since Davis had been hired not for his Africa expertise but rather for his other qualities, his advice on policy carried little author-

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ity. "What does *he* know about Africa?" Kissinger is said to have asked one aide about Davis. "He's only parroting the incompetents in the bureau." Yet since Davis was in any case the principal State Department officer for African affairs, his memoranda were the main channel for whatever expertise the Foreign Service could offer on Angola, leaving more knowledgeable officers in the bureau hostage to Davis' less-than-practiced grip on the problem. "I think we could have made a much more powerful case against the policy," said one desk officer. "There's no question that the arguments against it were weak." Another source who read the documents said, "The memos were so careful and indirect when they should have been screaming."

Finally, there was another irony that seems to have damaged Davis' bureaucratic influence with his superior. Brought back to Washington by Kissinger in part on the basis of his Chile experience, Davis was now, as he dissented on Angola, further pigeonholed as having lost his nerve to judge the policy precisely *because* of his tour in Santiago. "Kissinger figured from the start," said one witness, "that Angola would be one Chile too many for Nat." The larger tragedy and absurdity of this, of course, was that the Secretary of State somehow could not "figure" that it was also "one Chile too many" for most of us.

There is obviously no way to second-guess now whether a man with a credible background in Africa—and without Davis' peculiar mix of success and liabilities—could have turned around Kissinger's strong penchant for squandering millions of dollars and precious public trust in the Angolan fiasco. It is hard to imagine, though, a case in which errant bureaucratic and personality factors more polluted what ought to have been a genuine policy debate. What is more depressing is that Davis' career, the reasons underlying his appointment, and the foreign policy outcomes, are not that unusual.

Resignation by the Rules

So the memos were dismissed, the covert money pumped in at midsummer, and, at the end of August, Davis resigned, quietly. The State Department still formally denies that there was a letter of resignation, refusing even to use the word by saying that Davis was "reassigned." There *was* a letter. It did not, however, mention Angola, say officials who saw it; though Davis had made his reasons plain in numerous conversations with subordinates and superiors, he discreetly did not discuss the problem for the record. His letter reportedly cited the pressures of suspicion over his past service in Chile, and the cover story was put out to the *Post*. It was, as one senior foreign service officer put it, "the way to resign."

During September, as the Angolan intervention first became visible in the European press, Davis "scurried around," as one associate described it, trying to secure an ambassadorial assignment. Switzerland was arrived at very much by mutual agreement. "He had us between a hard place and a rock," said one official close to Kissinger, emphasizing that the Secretary wished to be rid of this internal embarrassment as soon as possible. The nomination moved swiftly to confirmation, without inquiry by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

As Davis prepared to leave for Switzerland, the public furor mounted over the Angola policy, now known at least in outline. And on Sunday, December 14, under the front page headline, "Angola Aid Issue Opening Rifts in State Department," *The New York Times* carried the report that Davis had resigned in a "sharp dispute" that "has bitterly divided the State Department." Davis had urged a "diplomatic solution," said the *Times*, and had resigned when the policy decision went against him. Davis "refused to comment" on the story, said the report. There followed another *Times* story on December 19

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reporting that U. S. aid to Angola had begun to flow some two months before the first significant Soviet shipments and repeating that Davis had opposed "an escalation" that would provoke Moscow.

It had all been done by the rules. The story was apparently leaked without Davis' involvement or even subsequent acknowledgement that it was generally true. When I called Davis and congratulated him on the dissent, I got the same response others have described: "Thank you. . . but as you can tell, I'm not commenting on anything." The signals within the bureaucracy were no more subtle. "If he'd resigned any other way," said one former official, "they'd have given him the War College," which foreign service officers generally regard as a burial ground. For the moment, Davis seemed to be enjoying the best of both worlds: his dissent blotting out his Chilean past and ushering him out of Washington as a hero among Democratic critics (who may, after all, be calling back exiled ambassadors to greater glory in 1977) and his propriety—the "no comment" in the resignation letter and to the *Times*—a certification of his loyalty to his employers. Others in the African bureau were reportedly not so lucky. Several sources say that Kissinger gave a veritable "purge order" to Davis' successor, William E. Schaufele, Jr., to rid the bureau of any officers associated with Davis' dissent. For some, this has meant routine reassignment; for others, a premature shift that may stain their records permanently.

An Extraordinary Act

Why did he do it, after nearly 30 years of compliant, ladder-climbing service? His submissiveness had led him unprotesting to the African job to begin with, despite his glaring lack of qualification, save pliability to Kissinger. The question is hard to answer, of course, because Davis himself, the only man who really knows, is not talking; but even that is a clue. It is true, says every source, that he opposed the Angola policy and left because of it. But it is not quite that simple to connect this with the words "dissent" or "protest." When he resigned in late August, the covert intervention was in full gear and still largely secret from the American public. In Angola, a war was widening on the strength of U. S. dollars; no one could discount the possiblity that involvement of American forces might lie ahead. Had Davis' first concern been to oppose the policy, a public resignation, or at least a late August leak, would have been a logical course, particularly since he seems to have believed exposure of the policy was inevitable anyway. As it was, nearly three months passed, three months of deepening involvement, escalation with the Russians, a growing macho investment for Ford and Kissinger, and, of course, added carnage in Angola. No, there seem to have been other influences in Davis' action.

Angola was a disastrous policy, which, despite his internal disagreement, would be added to his reputation in the wake of the Chilean scandal. It was the first major CIA operation in Africa in 15 years. It would be too much, as his loudest critics had charged when he took the job: Davis equals destabilization. In the political climate of 1975, it was not a label one would want to have in pursuing a government career, or leaving it. That, too, made for sincere opposition to the policy.

His resignation was by all means an extraordinary act, even done so quietly and conventionally. Whatever he calculated, he stood up and refused to carry out orders he thought wrong. How we have needed that kind of courage over the last 20 years! Nevertheless, it bears on the quality of his act, on its real impact in public affairs, that he may have done it not in spite of his career, but in order to salvage it. Bureaucrats, and the country, are seldom so lucky in the coincidence of national and career interests. ■

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Tidbits and Outrages

Still Wiggling

Some years ago, James Boyd proclaimed in these pages eleven rules that he found governed the conduct of politicians caught in a scandal. Rule 7 of Boyd's "Ritual of Wiggle" says: "At the moment of deepest personal disgrace, announce for reelection." We were reminded of it the other day by this story from *The Washington Post*:

Indicted Governor Will Run

Charleston, W. Va. Dec. 18—Gov. Arch A. Moore Jr. announced his candidacy for a third term today, less than two hours after he and a former aide were indicted on charges of extorting $25,000 from a savings and loan firm seeking a bank charter.

Jackpotty

Another triumph for government regulation was reported recently by Leon Dash of *The Washington Post*:

"A Washington-area supplier of natural gas was granted a rate increase last month by the Federal Energy Administration because the company had been 'poorly managed' and in need of additional capital to avoid bankruptcy."

It's the Same Over There

The problem of high-salaried public employees in phony jobs is not unique to America. Here's a satirical "situations wanted" ad from the British weekly, *Private Eye*.

Public Appointments—£20,000 plus

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c) The ushering in of a totally new era, as laid down by statute, in which all domestic jobs, nappy-washing etc. shall be performed only by house-persons (i.e. men).

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The successful applicant for this post will have to read through a lot of letters from men with beards and boring voices, and decide which lucky ones are to be paid £6,000-plus p.a. for doing nothing.

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Tidbits and Outrages

Life in the Age of Psycho-Mumbo-Jumbo

Last month Tom Bethell wrote in these pages about the insanity of the American system of justice that repeatedly works to put proven violent criminals back on the streets. Here is another example, by David Pike of *The Washington Star*:

"On Oct. 1, 1968, a 13-year-old girl walking in the 2100 block of 18th Street SE on her way home was raped after being struck with a cinderblock and a knife. A short while later, Edward Carter Jr., a neighbor, was arrested by police.

"Carter later was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of rape, rape while armed, assault with a deadly weapon and taking indecent liberties with a minor child, charges which carry penalties up to life in prison. The victim picked Carter out of a police lineup, and Carter later signed a statement admitting his guilt.

"However, Carter pleaded insanity at his trial before U.S. District Court Judge Gerhard A. Gesell. He was found not guilty by reason of insanity and committed on July 22, 1970, to St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

"During the trial, three doctors from the hospital testified that Carter was suffering from sexual sadism and non-psychotic organic brain syndrome with circulatory disturbance. The doctors noted that Carter, then 25, had told them he had raped about 300 women and obtained his sexual satisfaction by raping at knife-point, humiliating, frightening and injuring his victims in a brutal manner.

"Carter was confined in the maximum security section at St. Elizabeth's after his commitment. He managed to escape four times, for about three or four months each time, but without further reported criminal activity.

"Then, on Sept. 10, 1974, hospital officials wrote Gesell asking a change in the conditions of Carter's commitment so that he could be released from maximum security and eventually given grounds privileges and allowed visits into the community. Carter was described as a 'model inmate.' But the prosecutor in the Carter case, Asst. U. S. Atty. William H. Collins, Jr., objected to any such 'conditional release,' noting the escapes.

"Last Oct. 29, hospital officials again asked Carter's conditional release, again noting his improvement. But on Nov. 22, during a hearing on the new request, Gesell heard a startling revelation from a new doctor who had been treating Carter at the hospital—new and extensive tests showed that Carter was not suffering from any brain damage nor from any other mental illness. The original diagnosis was invalid, the doctor said, because the defendant had feigned mental illness to obtain an aquittal.

"A hospital report stated: 'The only present evidence to support a diagnosis of sexual sadism comes from the patient himself. The patient is obviously an unreliable witness—he claims now that he fabricated the 300-rape story to get an insanity defense in 1969. Today he says it was only 12 rapes. '. . . available police [arrest] reports show a history of general criminal activity, such as burglary, auto theft, homicide, assault with intent to commit rape, etc., rather than a distinct pattern of torturing women for sexual gratification. Without more to go on, the diagnosis of sexual sadism is dropped and the patient is without mental disorder.'

"Based on this and other testimony, Gesell yesterday said he had no choice but to find that Carter is 'without mental disorder' and to order his immediate and unconditional release from St. Elizabeth's."

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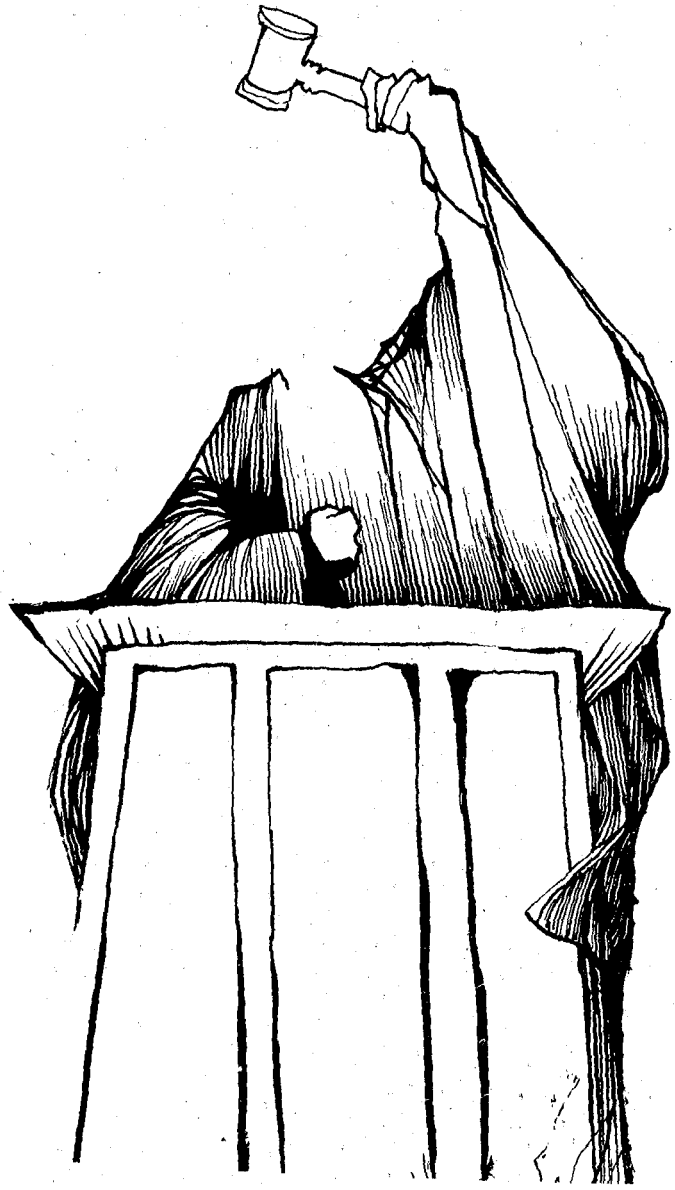
Feel Left Out?

For headlines that leave no doubt as to editorial point of view, the *Conservative Digest* has to win the prize. Here is a sampling from two recent issues:

Alger Hiss, Liar
Liberal Parents Can Ruin Their Children
Nuclear Power: The Answer to the Energy Crisis
The Best of Ronald Reagan
Taking Aim at Anti-Gun Politicians
Nothing Gay About Homosexuality
The Best of George Wallace



You Know They Won't Strike

Did you notice any difference in the quality of government during the last week of December? If not, we may have a basis for determining just how much the federal payroll can be cut, for, according to John Cramer of *The Washington Star*, the absenteeism rate for federal employees during that week was 60 per cent.

Slick Advisers

A proposal that tankers be required to have double bottoms to protect against oil spills has been turned down by a Coast Guard Advisory Committee. The committee members, according to James Perry of *The National Observer*, include: the chairmen of Exxon, Texaco, Standard Oil, and Gulf Oil Trading Co., and the heads of a variety of large oil-transport companies, including Chevron Shipping and Mobil Shipping. In addition, the U. S. Maritime Administration and the U. S. Coast Guard were represented.

The law required the committee to announce when and where it would meet, to hold open meetings, to make all the working papers and transcripts open to the public. None of this was done. The law also requires that membership of all government advisory committees be "fairly balanced."

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Defense Spending: The Dodos and the Platypuses

by Henry Fairlie

There can be no doubt that the United States is immensely strong, and we may be thankful for the fact. Yet there is cause for uneasiness: a feeling—perhaps no more than an inkling—that ten years from now it will be found to have been incalculably weakened.

The country will be weaker because its will has been weakened, in a specific way and for a specific reason: the public opinion of the country, and particularly its informed opinion, is today taking no real interest in defense policy. Unaware of how the country can act effectively, opinion will increasingly assume that it cannot act at all.

One can already sense this in the public debate on any of the danger areas of the world. The public—including those in Congress and in the press whose duty it is to instruct it—simply is not interested in what kinds of military power the country is capable of using and whose use *ought to be anticipated.* Events in the Middle East or in southern Africa, in the eastern Mediterranean or in the Iberian peninsula, are discussed as if the exercise of any military power by the United States, and not merely total nuclear war, is now "unthinkable." The public just does not know the various ways in which the country could act effectively or even safely.

If war is, as Clausewitz put it, "not merely a political act, but also a political instrument, a continuation of political relations, a carrying out of the same by other means," then the ultimate use of those other means is not something that the American

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people are today being invited to contemplate. It is in this way that the will of the country may be so weakened that its real military strength is in fact unusable, simply because the people do not know how that strength may be applied at different levels, and in different degrees.

One of the insights of J. M. Keynes was into the manner in which informed opinion is the instructor and even the creator of public opinion; and he pointed out that there is a time-lag before the informed opinion of the country is translated into its public opinion. That is why the next ten years seem to me to be so full of danger. The indifference of informed opinion to defense policy—when it is not actually hostile to the "defense establishment"—can breed by the 1980s a public opinion that is so unaware of the real available strength of the country that its strength will be paralyzed.

Lord Wavell, when he was Viceroy of India, wrote to George VI saying that Britain had the power to hold India, but that he did not think that it was possible to do so because the "will at the centre" had gone. There were many factors that had contributed to the erosion of that will in Britain, which do not apply today to America. The weakening of that will in America will be the result of ignorance: an ignorance that is already breeding in the public mind a belief that there is no effective application of military power that can be made which will not lead to total nuclear war or another Vietnam disaster.

My argument may therefore be regarded as an "Essay in Criticism." The debate about the defense policy of the United States needs to be reinvigorated. Since its military

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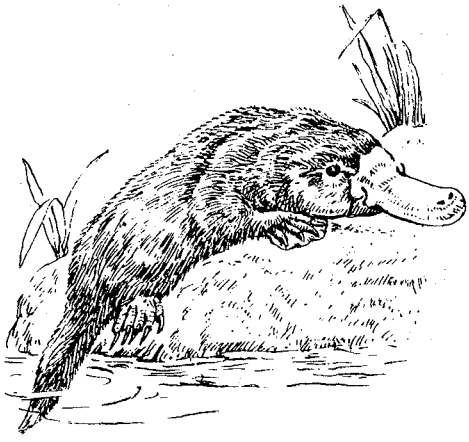
strength is a political instrument, and its exercise is the ultimate political act of any nation, we ought not to be surprised that the cutting edge which the debate so urgently needs will carry us, at least at first, into the realms of political philosophy. National defense is to a vital extent the ultimate concern of any political thought.

Those whom in this context we usually label as "conservatives," I intend to call Dodos; and those whom



we usually label as "liberals," I intend to call Platypuses. Insofar as there is today any public debate about defense, it is normally only from the Dodos and the Platypuses that we hear, and both their positions are untenable.

Consider the Dodo: with its short legs, its huge beak, its disproportionately large body, which could not be lifted from the ground by its flightless wings, and its ruff-like tail of curly feathers with no perceptible function. It is a suitable emblem of a "defense establishment" that may become top-heavy and of those who by their indiscriminate support of every request of the Defense Department encourage this top-heaviness. In particular, it is a suitable emblem of some of the members of the two Armed Services Committees. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the Dodos are less open to criticism than the Platypuses. The Dodos are performing a function that is recognizable and legitimate: that of sustaining the "defense establishment" of the country against the many critics who always abound in any democracy in peacetime.

The First Social Service

Consider then the Platypus: a mammal that does not give birth to live offspring but lays eggs with thin shells; its bill lacking teeth, it feeds off worms and water insects; with claws that are hollow, it burrows into river banks for protection. It is a suitable emblem of those who demand an overall reduction of the Defense Department's weaponry as automatically as the Dodos support increases.

It is the Platypuses who are today most at fault. By simply calling for an overall reduction in the defense budget, they throw the victory again and again to the Dodos: for if it is offered no other choices, any nation will sensibly prefer to waste money on defense rather than risk its own safety. In their present mood, the Platypuses will not recognize that national defense is—and will always be perceived to be—*the first of the social services*; and since the practicality of every other social service depends on its success, it cannot be criticized simply on the grounds of economy.

Platypuses are today faddishly distrustful of strong and extensive government. In their zealotry, the most obvious target is the annual budget of the Department of Defense. But they need to remember that, from John Locke on, the advocates of minimal government have always insisted that one of the legitimate functions of even the least extensive government is national defense. They should heed Locke if they wish to know why Lockheed will always survive: in a government whose activity is reduced, the priority that is given to defense will in fact be reinforced.

This is abundantly clear in con-

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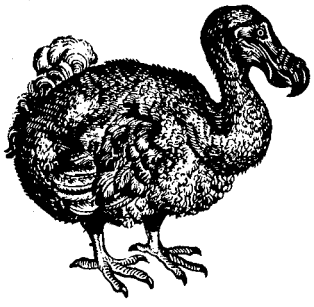
temporary politics. The most extreme advocates of minimal government, such as Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan, are also the fiercest supporters of all the claims of national defense, and philosophically their position is sound, for national defense is the irreducible obligation of even weak governments. It is the control of the "defense establishment" by a strong government, whose activities in other fields will force the claims of national defense into a position of strenuous competition for the available resources, which ought to be the concern of intelligent Platypuses. Strong central government is the only effective rival of the "military-industrial complex."

But at this crucial level of the argument, the Dodos are also intransigent. They will not face the fact that, given the cost and the complication of the weapons that are now required, the "defense establishment" has today become the most relentless instigator and nourisher of a socialized economy in the country. The defense industries are, in effect, nationalized industries, which happen to be allowed to make profits for their shareholders. Dodos who inveigh against the "creeping socialism" in America ought to be booing most vigorously at Boeing. Curiously, they never do.

A Debate of Acronyms

It is partly because both the Dodos and the Platypuses conduct the debate about national defense from grounds that are philosophically untenable that this debate is today so casual and, in the end, meaningless. The public is often shrewder than is allowed. It senses when a debate is unreal and so loses interest. It knows well that both the automatic demands of the Platypuses for a reduction in the overall size of the defense budget and the automatic support of the Dodos are unreal; and so it grows indifferent and ignorant, until the time may soon come when it simply will not be able to contemplate the application of the country's military strength in situations that demand it.

If the chosen grounds of the Dodos and the Platypuses are philosophically untenable, the "pragmatists" have no ground at all. To approach the debate as "pragmatists"—I use the term merely as it was vulgarly used in the Kennedy years—is to throw the argument back to the "experts" in the Department of Defense and the rest of the "defense establishment." It is to admit that the intelligent and even the informed layman is hardly equipped



to judge the relative efficiency of one sophisticated weapon or another. It is to make the debate one of acronyms, so that the public mind is in the end only stupified by MARVs and MIRVs, by SLBMs and SRAMs. It is to remove the debate about national defense from the realm of political judgment.

Moreover, it means also that the "pragmatic" Platypuses, for all the initial boldness of their demands to reduce the overall size of the defense budget, are in fact confined to criticizing individual weapons or defense systems *after* these have already been proved inefficient or wasteful. It is in the nature of the duckbill Platypus that it nibbles; and although there is always some publicity to be had from "exposing" the scandal of some useless weapon that has cost billions to produce, this kind of criticism is usually too late, and meanwhile some other weapon, at least as useless and even more costly, is in the works.

The public mind and political judgment of the country need to be brought to bear much earlier, and in a

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different way: the procurement of weapons should be decided at the same time that the military objectives are defined.

With all its intelligence and thoroughness, the last annual report of James R. Schlesinger is skimpy in its outlines of the objectives that the Defense budget is intended to reach. Given the skimpiness of these definitions, there is no sensible way in which the informed citizen can ask: What is meant to be the function of this weapon, and how is it to be used, against what enemy? Could it not be performed by some other weapon that already exists or is less costly?

The Smell of Rand

It is only in such terms that the debate can be effective and be made comprehensible to the public mind. It is only in such terms that the public mind can be prepared to anticipate the effective use of the military strength of the country in a situation that demands it. It is only in such terms that the public mind can hope to ask intelligently: What weapons that are being developed are not needed, and what weapons that are needed are not being developed; is there a "Spitfire" or a "Hurricane" that is being overlooked?

For example, on the vital question of maintaining a strategic nuclear balance, the annual Defense Department report slips away—it is almost as casual as that—from the doctrine of "sufficiency" to one of "parity." *Sufficiency* was defined by Richard Nixon as "the maintenance of forces adequate to prevent us or our allies from being coerced." Parity or "essential equivalence" is defined in the annual report in terms that are quite different: "... we cannot allow asymmetries to develop in throw-weight, accuracy, yield-to-weight ratio, reliability and other such factors... it would be a mistake to allow any major asymmetry to develop between the United States and the Soviet Union in the basic technological and other factors that shape force effectiveness."

In short, one of the most fundamental military objectives of the United States seems to have been redefined—without any public debate worth the name—to suggest that America must now deploy intercontinental strategic systems in the total numbers that are authorized under the Vladivostock agreement, and that it must therefore match—equal—the capabilities of the Soviet Union, weapon by weapon, throw-weight by throw-weight, lest an "asymmetry" might develop.

The word "asymmetry," which has all the smell of the Rand Corporation about it, conceals a whole range of assumptions: that the United States must reach the force levels authorized by the Vladivostock agreement, even if its present force levels are sufficient; that there is some rational way of determining when "essential equivalence" has been reached, and so further new deployments are unnecessary; and that it is possible to measure the effectiveness of one system—say, bombers—against that of another system—say, ICBMs.

Beginning at the End

Only if the fundamental assumption, that sufficiency must be replaced by parity, is clearly debated is it possible then to turn one's attention to the actual proposals for "force modernization and improvement" in the annual report. These include continued improvements in the Minuteman III missiles, silo up-grading, advanced ICBM technology, development of advanced ballistic re-entry systems, B-52 modifications, conversion of Poseidon configuration and the procurement of Poseidon missiles; *plus* the development of new sytems, such as the B-1 bomber and the Trident submarines and missiles; *plus* the development of other weapons and systems, such as short-range attack missiles, advanced cargo/tanker aircraft, remotely piloted vehicles

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(RPV). And that does not exhaust the list.

The emblem of the top-heavy Dodo begins to seem appropriate, and the Dodos will of course give their overall approval to so over-plumed a bird, while the Platypuses will perhaps nibble at one system here, or one weapon there.

But the point from which the debate should be raging in the public mind, not least in an election year, is whether it is a sensible military objective for the United States to allow its procurement and development of systems and weapons to be dictated by the Soviet Union, for that is really what the doctrine of "essential equivalence" and "aysmmetry" ultimately means: that the decisions of the Pentagon will be made in the Kremlin.

The point I am hammering at is that the Platypuses begin at the end of this sequence of argument. They begin by questioning some (obvious or apparent) wastefulness in systems or weapons, while the basic military objectives are by and large unexamined, and so become the ground from which both the Department of Defense and the Dodos who are its defenders—the very letters in the emblem are appropriate—can justify every expenditure. It is after all a political decision—as a Bismarck as well as a Clausewitz would have understood it—to allow the deployment of one's national defense to be dictated by the anticipated enemy.

Without some clearer statement of the military objectives, how can the public mind debate such questions as: the emphasis that is presently given to antisubmarine warfare by the Navy; the role of the expensive and vulnerable aircraft carriers and indeed of all surface ships; the role of the amphibious forces which are relatively expensive and whose military usefulness is limited—and so one could continue through every part of the defense budget.

If, for example, a conventional war in Europe would be so short that it would not be necessary to keep open the sea lanes, if in fact it can be reasonably shown that no effort to keep them open would be likely to succeed, then the function and cost of the entire surface fleet of the United States Navy is open to critical examination. But once again the answers depend on the strategic assumptions that are being made.

Skeptical But Friendly

Perhaps it will now be seen why I began by suggesting that the will of the United States may be incalculably weakened in the next ten years by ignorance more than by any other factor. The public mind of the country—by which I mean its "informed" opinion in fruitful tension with its "public" opinion—is simply in no position to know how its forces may be used most effectively, or even to know (this is the danger) that it has the forces by which it may effectively exert its strength in situations when it is necessary, and in ways which will not lead to disaster.

The United States has never given its armed forces the social prestige which they used to have in European countries. Perhaps the Marines in the past, and the Strategic Air Command in the first 15 years after World War II, had something of the status of elite forces. But generally the armed forces fight at home against a severe public and especially intellectual indifference and distrust; and even hostility.

Up to a point, that is healthy. But it also leaves the armed forces, on the one hand, without the benefit of intelligent criticism that is skeptical but friendly, and it leaves the public, on the other hand, with much too little understanding of the effective military strength which is available to the country in situations of varying danger and different requirements. If this mutual indifference, of the armed forces and the public mind to each other, is not corrected, the ability of the United States to secure its interests and meet its responsibilities will steadily and quickly evaporate. ■

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The Honey and the Source: Reporters and Their Status Taboo

by Tom Bethell

The response to Barney Collier's book, *Hope and Fear In Washington (The Early Seventies): The Story of the Washington Press Corps*, has been so immoderately hostile all round that you know he must have put his finger on an exposed nerve. It can't just be a bad book that everyone is so upset about; bad books are published every day of the year, and if they are as bad as this one is supposed to be, they are ignored. Collier's book, by contrast, has been hissed at venomously for months.

One's immediate suspicion is that there must be some Hidden Meaning here. I have now read the book and read the reviews, turned back rather puzzled to the book, glanced over the reviews again, and concluded that, yes, there is indeed an Interesting Question worth examining. En route we will encounter a number of Burning Issues.

The story so far: In 1973 Barnard Law Collier, a journalist formerly with the New York *Herald Tribune* and *The New York Times*, but by then a free-lance writer (he left the *Times* under circumstances he does not precisely elucidate, but which seem to have had something to do with an over-stuffed expense account: the book includes an amusing description of Foreign Editor Seymour Topping's arrival in Buenos Aires to talk to Collier about "expense accounts that make people laugh"), decided to write about the Washington press corps. He already knew most of the people he was going to write about, and so he called them up, chatted on the phone, had lunch, dropped by their offices. The first inkling anyone had of what was to come was a piece in *[More]*, the journalism review, about Sander Vanocur, formerly a correspondent for NBC-TV, but by then down on his luck and looking for a job. Vanocur and Collier had lunch at Jean-Pierre's, one of Washington's better restaurants:

> Sander entered Jean-Pierre's in an obvious hustle, waving a newspaper in one hand, while the other patted the maitre d's

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shoulder. In a voice loud enough for anyone who cared to hear, the maitre d' announced: "Oh, hello, Mister *Vanocur.* How are you today?"

Sander looked around for faces in the dimly lighted room.

By the next issue *[More]* had a firestorm on its hands. Many journalists wrote in to complain. . . gone too far this time. . . gossip. . .. kicking a man when he's down. . . ignoring the Burning Issue, namely, Was Vanocur Too Close To The Kennedys? Collier had written about such things as what Vanocur ordered from the menu, how he talked loud enough to be heard and recognized at the next table, and how he "blocked my arm with his shoulder to prevent me from reaching over to examine the check."

Journalists and Superstars

The book was published in the fall of 1975 and received hostile reviews everywhere. Eric Sevareid sent a *furioso* letter to *The Washingtonian*, which had run further extracts from the book. Sevareid compared Collier rather extravagantly to "the sick loners in the crowd who use real guns to assassinate the prominent."

Theodore White called it "toilet bowl journalism."

Geoffrey Wolff, writing in *New Times*, was beside himself with rage. "Why did Collier write it?" Wolff fulminated. "Who knows. He's a creep, that much is clear from his book. And he wants to punish people who have succeeded in the profession in which he failed. That much also is clear. And he's socially envious. And probably The Dial Press paid him something for this nothing. And because he thinks he's opened a few bathroom doors on people and caught them at something or other. Poor turkey, he's only caught himself. But why did The Dial Press print this piece of shit? That I would like to know."

Phew! Next Alexander Cockburn weighed in with a lengthy essay on gossip in *The New York Review*, this being the theme of his review of four books, including Collier's, and *We're Going To Make You A Star* by Sally Quinn. "Gossip" is a pejorative term commonly applied to books disapproved of by reviewers these days, and with its chic chatter about psychopathology, Cockburn's article was suitably *à la mode* in other ways, if not entirely intelligible. Collier, Cockburn felt, "has produced a work of such evidently cruel triviality that the reader constantly asks himself why on earth a grown man should have felt compelled to write it. The interest in the book lies precisely in this compulsion, the fact that Collier's intent seems to be to display himself in a gossip's neurotic dance of death. From inside the book a bad novel about journalism is probably struggling to get out, but Collier cannot manage this."

He adds that Collier "presents himself visibly to the reader as a shit."

A creep, a shit. Golly. Is he really that awful? In fact, Collier does at times seem to relish showing himself in a rather unpleasant light: an unusual form of exhibitionism. He seems to be part crazy, part intelligent; but surely it is very presumptuous to assume that he is "envious" of the people he is writing about. I don't think Collier regards Washington journalists as enviable people at all. Collier asks his subjects plenty of ridiculous questions, and, to his credit, embarrassing ones, too. It is true, as Cockburn remarks, that his plan often appears to be "to trap them into foolish remarks, to reveal some 'secret'." Just as journalists love to do with politicians, of course. When that happens, as we know, the journalist will get up onto a pedestal and proclaim: First Amendment! Freedom of the Press! When a journalist does it to other journalists they get up onto a different pedestal and bawl: The Creep! The Shit!

But surely the point is that Collier's book can be discussed quite independently of his character, whatever that may be. This simple notion has, unfortunately, eluded those jour-

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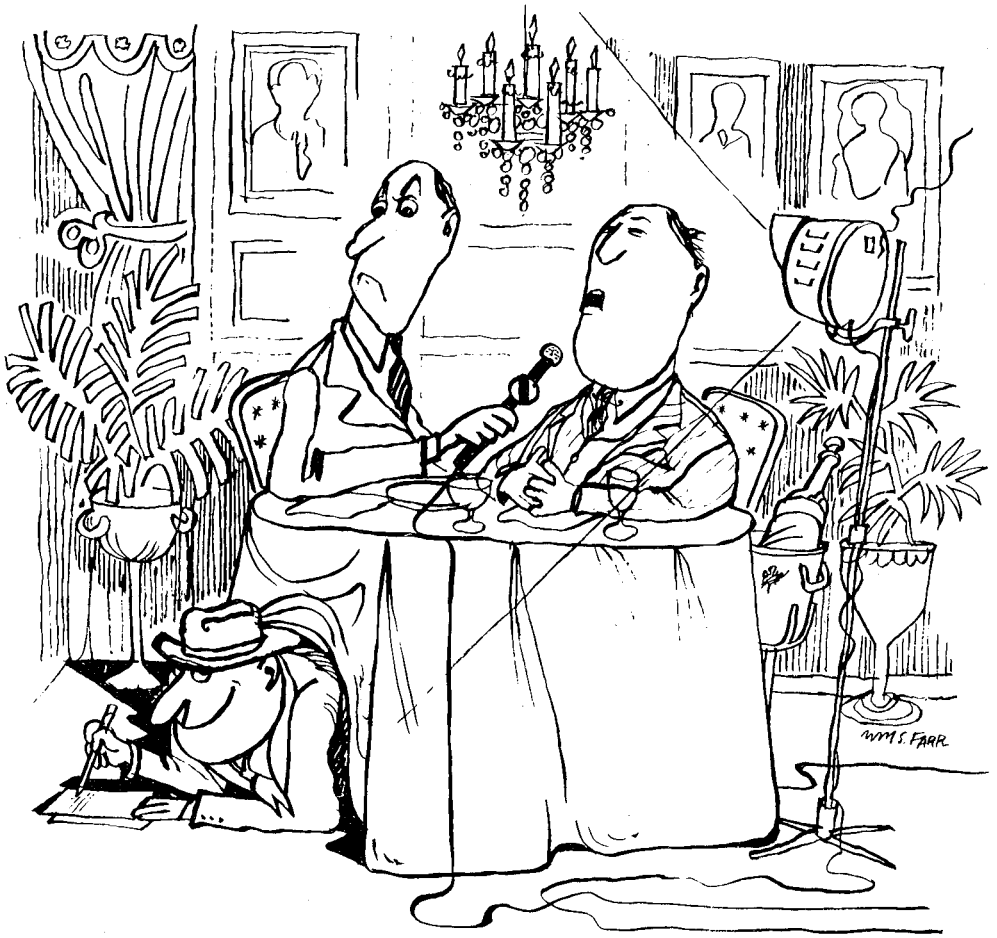

Sharon Farr

nalist-reviewers who have leaped to the defense of their colleagues with an *ad hominem* attack on Collier.

By the time I came across Nora Ephron's review in *Esquire*, this Burning Issue had cropped up in my mind: a book less than entirely flattering to journalists is disliked by journalists. How very surprising! I tried to imagine the cries of "Foul!" that would be heard across the land if, say, a book by a White House staffer critical of the President were assigned for review to other members of the administration and found to be a bad book. Just such an issue might have interested media critic Ephron, but she chose to ignore it, revealing instead that there was a minor conspiracy of silence afoot to try to stop people from hearing about Collier's book.

She wrote: "The thing the Washington journalists in the book said to me when I called them up to say I was writing a column about it was, Don't, don't write anything about it, you'll just give the book publicity and end up selling copies of it." Towards the end of her column, Ephron made another revealing observation: "I realized, as I read Collier's book, that I would not have been nearly as offended by it if it had been about movie stars. . . ."

There you have another Burning Issue, as I realized when I looked at two other reviews in which Collier was accused of attacking the *superstars* of journalism. Not "superstars," mind you, no irony was intended. Superstars. The Burning Issue here: Are Journalists Becoming Too Famous? Nora Ephron deals with this worri-

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some matter very inadequately, however, because she suggests that the best way for the Journalist-as-Superstar to cope with the celebrity problem is to stop granting interviews to people like Barney Collier. But the problem here is that these people didn't become celebrities because Collier wrote about them—he wrote about them precisely because they were celebrities. Television did it, not The Dial Press. Ephron's suggestion amounts to a recommendation that journalists make themselves even more like movie stars—in effect by getting themselves press agents. This may not be a bad idea if you happen to be having a problem with the autograph hunters at Elaine's, but it doesn't go very far towards solving the larger problem.

One hears a good deal of discussion these days among journalists about The Problem—the problem of journalists writing too much about one another, and so on, and a number of journalists really would like the celebrity problem to go away so they could get back to the serious business of covering news without all this distraction. Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea—and it would be nice to return to a simpler world in other ways, too.

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A Grant of Immunity

But it's not going to happen, because celebrated people are legitimately a part of the news, "news" being defined primarily by the curiosity of the public. Furthermore, as Samuel Huntington recently commented in *The Public Interest*, "there has come into existence a national press with the economic independence and communications reach to play a role with respect to the President that a local newspaper plays with respect to a mayor."

As long as that lasts, and that will be presumably as long as television lasts, then the people who bring us the news are not only themselves news, but they urgently need scrutiny and criticism. What is so disconcerting about the apparently sensible, let's-come-back-down-to-earth suggestion that the press stop writing about itself is that lurking behind it there seems also to be a desire for a grant of immunity from criticism for our gallant gentry of the Fourth Estate. And that is one thing that bothers me about the intemperate hostility to Collier's book.

At any rate, when one actually reads the book after all this fuss and bother, one immediately encounters something that no reviewer, apparently, had dared mention. Parts of the book are well written, observant, funny, and it is not nearly so hostile to most of its subjects as the reviews suggest. In fact, this disparity is so great that it seems journalists in some quarters have indeed become like film stars in that they tend to react violently to anything less than total praise.

It must also be said, however, that some of the criticism this book has received is well deserved. First of all, two of the portraits included, those of

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John Chancellor of NBC and Meg Greenfield of *The Washington Post*, are outright malicious, and if they had been excluded, as they should have been, it would be much easier to praise the book. Secondly, Collier tells us much too much about himself, and he frequently does so in a sentimental, mawkish way, talking about his wife and child and rabbit, too, as though he wanted us to be sure we knew (as one reviewer put it) that he "has his feet firmly planted in the loam of Mother Earth and his mind nestled in the bosom of Mother Nature." Overall, the book is very uneven, with dreadful, cute chapter headings, quite a number of sections that don't work at all, and other sections that are, if anything, rather too cloyingly praiseworthy about their subjects.

'Who's Got Clout?'

The best sections deal with journalists whom Collier evidently does not feel strongly about one way or the other, but is content to observe with a degree of detachment, for instance, James Reston of *The New York Times:*

He puffed smoke from a curved pipe. He called me, "My boy," as if I were a son.

Scotty's voice was mellow and brooding.

"Where are all the great men?" he asked. "Where are the poets? *Where* are the philosophers?"

Scotty said, "The last great man... puff... to die... puff... was Mike Pearson... who was once Prime Minister of Canada."

He went on, almost without blinking. "The world's poets are now second rate and the living philosophers... puff... except for Mao Tse-tung... are mostly *faddist*."

In a puff, Scotty was transformed from a voice of prophesy and doom into a feisty little son of a knotty-kneed, left-handed shipyard worker on the filthy banks of the Clyde River in Glasgow. Scotty was suddenly angry and indignant that a furtive pretender like President Nixon had frozen Scotty Reston out of the White House, a house he had visited as an honored guest for 20 years. Scotty refused to believe that Americans would elect a man to the White House who didn't see the wisdom of simple, old-fashioned beliefs.

"Every day it's like a new drop of poison," Scotty spit.

Puff... Puff... Scotty was an oracle again.

There are several pages of this, and it is well done, I think. It is a vignette, certainly, a sketch, but Collier succeeds in bringing Reston to life as I have not seen in other descriptions of the man. It is a sympathetic portrait.

Here is Art Buchwald in the Sans Souci (a fashionable restaurant in Washington):

Anyone who enters must play. A player makes his entrance through a proscenium archway, with a curtain. Then there is a narrow runway from the archway across the stage platform and down two steps into the pit.

Art was seated at his preferred table, down in the pit with his back to the wall....

We talked about Washington, while I watched him.

His attention was over my right shoulder, on the archway. He watched the entrance and act of each star player.

In between scenes, Art turned his attention to me. He was businesslike. He gave me some ideas for the book, and he suggested a title.

He said, "I name lots of guys' books."

I said, "Okay, what's your name?"

He said, " 'Clout in Washington.' "

I said, "Who's 'Clout'?"

"Clout, clout, like somebody with a big fist."

"Who's got clout? Among the journalists?"

"Oh... Scotty Reston's got clout... Lippmann had clout."

"Do you have clout?"

"Nah... nah. I don't have clout. Everybody in Washington loves me."

"Does Ben Bradlee have clout?"

He hesitated. He hesitated. He hesitated. He hesitated.

"You're not going to *do* him, are ya?"

"Isn't he your friend?" I asked.

Art nodded his head, yes.

"I'm going to do him," I said.

Then Art saw something coming that caused him to hunch up his shoulders, suck in the left side of his mouth, close his left eye, cock his head to the right and up, and shake.

Behind me I heard the footsteps, in a prancing trot. Then, as a lady in a pink

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pantsuit, with her neck skin hanging, leaned her belted belly over my shoulder, I smelled the aroma of Joy.

She put a kiss on the part of Art that he offered her—the upper rim of his left ear.

Almost every weekday lunchtime when Art is in town, he takes in the show at Sans Souci. He watches with screwy eyes.

"Weird," was Art Buchwald's one-word description of the book, and that's not a bad description. Most of the portraits in the book are, in fact, ambiguous: if you liked the person, you could see what you liked, if you disliked him or her, you could see what you disliked. The Buchwald portrait itself is in that category, as are many others—Dan Rather, Rowland Evans, Eric Sevareid, Ben Bradlee, and (as far as I am concerned) the much-maligned Sander Vanocur chapter (with the caveat that the brief discussion of Vanocur's reported affair with Shirley MacLaine, the film actress, was in very poor taste considering that Vanocur's wife was dying of cancer at the time; this, however, reflected poorly on Collier, not on Vanocur).

There are also a goodly number of outright favorable accounts: Stewart Alsop, Mel Elfin, Bob Novak, Helen Thomas, Soma Golden, Betty Beale, the Kalb brothers, Mike Waters, Jack Anderson, Maxine Cheshire.

Then what is all the fuss about? Here we begin to get into the Interesting Question. In the first place, as a result of the press's role—or perhaps one should say alleged role—in the demise of Richard Nixon, a good deal of public attention has been focused on the press, in particular the Washington Press Corps. Hollywood arrived in the *Washington Post* newsroom. The press loved it, of course, and, as it now seems, sought a further taste of blood and fame by clawing and scratching at other American institutions—most recently the intelligence community.

Barney Collier rather conspicuously has not joined in the applause after the Watergate act. He talks of the *Post* as having "torpedo tubes." And here he is on Richard Nixon and the press:

The gnats were getting to him. They were flying in his eyes and buzzing in his ears, and nowhere could he go without being bothered by them. The press was a plague of gnats, biting and biting and flying into his face and eyes, and if he tried to get away from them, in some hidden office, he would look at the fruit bowl, and there, flying above a peach, would be a gnat.

Gnats swarmed like reporters, and after a while it was hard to tell gnats and reporters apart. Only reporters were worse. They did not die with the first frost. They flitted day and night, every day, everywhere.

Maggi Castelloe

Bob Pierpoint at the White House.

There were eyes everywhere. Mel Elfin sat in his *Newsweek* bureau, a block away from the White House, and he watched. His eyes were sharp. Dan Rather's watched. Helen Thomas's eyes were dark and very strange, they saw everything. . . . The gnats were driving President Nixon to distraction. The gnats were more fierce than ever that summer because they were well fed by the mess of Watergate. They swarmed around Watergate in clouds, and the worse Watergate smelled, the more gnats came, it seemed from everywhere.

The gnats flew on the presidential press plane, with the best care and feeding.

Gnats! You'll pay for that, Barney.

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But from the press's point of view, there is something more threatening, I believe, about Collier's book. After all, you can laugh off the comment about gnats, although there is surely some justice to Collier's observation. No, far worse is the fact that Collier doesn't seem to be taking the press seriously *at all* in this book, *except insofar as they illuminate status life in Washington*.

Barney Collier interviews all these important people from the press, the "stars people know," as CBS Washington bureau chief Bill Small had suggested to him (although he needn't have bothered), and Collier isn't in the tiniest degree interested in what they write about or orate about. This, I think, has truly offended the press. Collier tells us, for example, that Johnny Apple of the *Times* "plopped into a chair upstairs in the living room and almost immediately began to babble about politics."

Collier uses the word "babble" several times when his subjects talk about politics. This is what they write about, of course, but he just doesn't want to hear about it. Even Stewart Alsop, whom Collier treats respectfully, is described at one point as "doing what so many Washington journalists habitually do in the company of others, and sometimes alone with their typewriters. He babbled knowingly about politics."

When this happened, apparently, Collier either changed the subject or walked out of the room. (Really, it's hardly surprising the press as a whole isn't thrilled about this book.) Now, like the good, tame media critic he was supposed to be, perhaps he should have taken note of it all and worried about the Burning Issues, such as: Are Evans and Novak Too Close To Their Sources? Just as Timothy Crouse did in his basically deferential (and widely praised) book *The Boys On The Bus*. When Johnny Apple talked politics to Crouse, Crouse listened. And like any good journalist, he developed sources, who told him more about Apple, such as "that interview with John Gilligan where Gilligan talked about all the things that were going wrong with Muskie's campaign. Apple has worked Gilligan as a source for a long time and he got Gilligan to say things that. . . ."

'Are You Ready for This?'

The press loved Crouse's book when it came out because he was such a good kid out there on the sidelines, occasionally calling "foul" here, putting thumbs down there, but his heart was in the right place because he took the game so seriously. He was truly interested in Apple's Source.

And Crouse's book really did seem interesting when it came out. But two years later it is already beginning to read like something you come across on the 69-cent shelf of remaindered items. After only a very short period, all that topical stuff about reporters begins to seem just about as boring as out-of-date. . . well, gossip.

Yes, gossip—to turn the tables on those who have accused Collier (and others) of dispensing gossip. It seems to me that the most important attribute of gossip, the *sine qua non*, is that it be *absolutely up-to-date*. As in: Did you hear the latest? Did you hear that the so-and-so's are splitting up? Did you hear what happened to Miss Jones down the road? Are you ready for this?

As in: Did you hear about the latest Gallup Poll? Did you hear about the latest CIA outrage? Did you hear about Johnny Apple's source in Ohio? Are you ready for this?

The horrible truth, as many journalists must surely realize, is that the kind of immediacy and up-to-dateness required to get a story on the front page of a newspaper tends also to ensure its total oblivion a few months later. Most news stories have a "half life" of anywhere from one day to six months or so. After that they're dead, excepting only for perusal by media critics, professors of sociology, and, with any luck, a patient researcher or historian winding his way through the

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microfilm in the decades and centuries ahead . Consider the vast coverage right now of Campaign '76, and imagine going back to the newspaper morgues and trying to read through the same material for Campaign '72. A Sisyphean task! It's hard enough even now to read about Campaign '76, unless one happens to have a vested interest in the outcome, in which case the whole thing takes on a horse-race quality, which of course is close to the spirit in which it is written up in the dailies.

Day-to-Day Trivia

The fact is, most journalists—certainly almost all journalists in Washington—write "stories" that it would be almost inconceivable to imagine wanting to read a year later (24 hours later often is more like it), and to make matters worse, most of them write about incredibly narrow little wavelengths out of the total spectrum of human events. Most of them seem to be quite happy to do this, however, because they think of themselves (with some justice) primarily as policy makers and only secondarily as writers.

But curiously enough, anyone from the fraternity who breaks ranks, breaks the rules, and decides to write about the broader spectrum of life-as-it-is-being-lived is apparently in danger of being denounced by his colleagues. "New journalism" is almost as unpopular among the "working press" as it is among the "men of letters" who write modish essays praising whatever is currently fashionable. For some reason, this form of journalistic rule-breaking is seen as a threat. There is an important exception, however, and that is when the journalist turns his back entirely on contemporary realism, retires to the woods and writes a novel. He can then be praised for his courage and safely ignored. This has happened recently to Ward Just, a former *Washington Post* reporter, whose novels have very probably been praised more than they have been read. Alexander Cockburn sneered at Collier for being unable to write the novel that he perceived in this material, and in fact Collier did consider changing all the names in the book to fictitious names. Had he done so, the book would have been ignored, or possibly given some faint praise. Journalists would have professed to admire Collier's "courage," but they wouldn't have bothered to read the book.

An interesting case of reporters who turned from the narrow front page to the broader spectrum of life is that of Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward in *All The President's Men*. The news story of Watergate was developed, as most such stories are, with each tiny little bit of new information being added to the store of what was already known. The Bernstein-Woodward stories were of this type, but when they wrote the book they had the sense to give us something other than all the tiny little bits added together. They gave us the story of what it was like to work on *The Washington Post* on such a story, all the day-to-day trivia, in other words, all the behind-the-scenes stuff. And it worked. It was interesting, even though it was, by the lights of what is normally allowed onto the front page, trivia. Although Bernstein and Woodward may not have intended it, we ended up with something approximating a picture of life in Washington in the early 1970s. Nevertheless, their book was widely criticized when it came out, and it was criticized precisely because it included the day-to-day stuff and not the weighty analysis and interpretation and moralizing that the reviewers seemed to want.

One example from their book perfectly illustrates the hard-news-has-a-short-life thesis: Carl Bernstein's "Quivering Hands" story. At one point Bernstein went to a presidential press conference and noted that Nixon's hands "did not stop shaking." He wanted to put this in the *Post* story, but was reprimanded by his hard-news-approach editor. All the

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Post wanted to know was what the President said. All right, fair enough, no need to be unnecessarily hard on Nixon, no need to run the risk of being accused of bias, et cetera. But the fact remains that today, such a short time later, whatever it was that Nixon said at that press conference is of no conceivable interest; whereas, I submit, the fact that his hands were shaking when he said it is still interesting (unless, perhaps, it was a permanent condition with Nixon). To reverse the usual judgment on Bernstein and Woodward, I should imagine that it is in their book that their names will survive, not in their original newspaper stories. (In fact one imagines that they are hoping no very serious scrutiny of their original stories will be undertaken, lest anyone point out what is surely the truth—that their contribution to the demise of Nixon has been wildly exaggerated.)

A Lesson in Manners

Anyway, I think that Barney Collier must have been aware of some of these points about short-term interest and long-term interest when he wrote his book, and thus made the wise decision to exclude all political "gossip." Consider, for a minute, the case of Evans and Novak. Their column is, surely, pure political gossip—what was said at yesterday's secret meeting—although none the worse for that; it is certainly one of the more readable columns, and infinitely preferable to the rumination that most columnists give us. But still, it is difficult to imagine reading an Evans and Novak column that is more than about a week old for precisely that reason (unless you happen to be one of those people who not only likes to read the political gossip but also goes to bed at night worrying about such matters as: Are They Too Close To Their Sources?).

Collier wrote about something else entirely. Here he is in Rowland Evans's Georgetown house. It is a passage that, for some reason, I can't get out of my mind:

> Rolly led me to the back of the house where a small breakfast table was set in a room with a glass ceiling and glass walls like a greenhouse but as tall as a two-story birdhouse, with the birds flown away. He said the glass was tinted and extra strong to withstand hail. He said it had required thousands of dollars of architecture and engineering to build. Rolly was extremely proud of it; it was what he seemed most proud of about his house.
>
> I asked him how he managed to pay for such a project, and he said, "Oh, I've got plenty of money. Actually, it was from the money Bob and I made on one of our books."
>
> Outside the windows of the structure, in a space that used up the entire small backyard, was a swimming pool in the style of a Grecian bath. The water was mirrory still and dark and the terrace was of a blackish stone. Ten-foot-high columns supported the low sky on each side. Fall leaves and apples floated in the water. It was impressive and strange.
>
> Rolly said: "It's a terrific pain in the ass, Barney, but I like it."
>
> Rolly and I ate fried bacon, tea, white bread toast, and honey. Rolly was very careful about the honey. And he was possessive of the honeypot. When I reached for it, he said, "Careful of that."
>
> He took his knife and showed me how he buttered his bread a little first, and then put honey on it, never touching his knife to the bread so as not to transfer crumbs to the honeypot.
>
> It was a lesson in manners. I did my toast the same way he did.

A lesson in manners. Weird! All right, weird it is. But let me ask, a hundred years from now, which will seem more interesting, Georgetown manners in the early 1970s, or what the state chairman secretly said last week?

The Honey or the Source?

We know the answer, of course, although some of us apparently hate to admit it to ourselves. Others have chosen to spit at Collier for daring to bring up what is, in effect, a taboo subject.

The subject is rank, "clout," manners, class, who ranks, who's who. *Status* is the true subject of Collier's

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book. In a way, the most interesting thing about status is that it is a subject that nearly everyone prefers to avoid entirely. The subject of status is like a house with thickly curtained windows, boarded up entrances, No Entry signs, and guards patrolling the perimeter. As Tom Wolfe has truly said, status is "just *the* fundamental taboo, more so than sexuality and everything of that sort."

Collier apparently hadn't heard about this prohibition (as I say, he seems to be half crazy), and he walked straight past the guards, got inside the statusphere and had a lovely time holding up a number of forbidden objects for our inspection. To do this, it is true that he *used* his journalist friends, or perhaps ex-friends would be more accurate; and I suppose this is what has outraged them as much as anything. He only pretended to be writing a book about journalism, when in fact he was writing one much more nearly about "manners." The upsetting point seems to be not so much that the "revelations" are so shocking, because they are not, as that they are so "trivial." The "trivial" details often have a way of making a much more basic point.

Collier proceeded on the assumption that if someone is well enough known, almost everything about him is, in a way, interesting, and his most insignificant actions can be used to illuminate the forbidden topics of class and status. Collier used famous journalists to do this, not (I believe) to put down journalists, or because he was "envious" of them, but because this happened to be the only group of famous people he had easy access to. And it wasn't a bad choice, either. As *Vogue* has recently reminded us (in an article about gossip), "Washington, D. C., has become the new-age Hollywood." In that sense, then, Nora Ephron is quite right in pointing out the connection between journalism and stardom.

Answers to the January puzzle:

P	R	I	M	A	R	Y		N	O	M	I	N	E	E
O		N		N		U		U		E		E		P
L	A	C	E	D		C	A	M	P	A	I	G	N	S
I		O		I		C		B		N		R		I
T	A	M	E	R	L	A	N	E		D	R	O	O	L
I		M		O				R		E				O
C	R	O	W	N	E	D		O	U	R	T	O	W	N
		D				I		N				M		
P	R	E	F	A	B	S		E	N	G	L	I	S	H
O				S		A				O		S		E
L	E	A	D	S		S	P	R	U	C	E	S	U	P
L		M		E		T		A		A		I		C
I	M	P	E	R	F	E	C	T		R	H	O	D	A
N		L		T		R		E		T		N		T
G	R	E	A	S	E	S		D	E	S	I	S	T	S

Social Climbing

Another writer who is quite well known for violating the status taboo is Sally Quinn of *The Washington Post*. She does this here and there in her book *We're Going To Make You A Star*, an account of her unsuccessful tryout for the CBS Morning News in 1973. Like Barney Collier, she has been accused of writing gossip, although the reviews of her book that I have seen have been merely snide, not overtly hostile. This in itself is rather odd, because her book could be construed as being far more damaging to certain CBS figures than anything Collier wrote about his subjects. (Quinn, for example, raises questions about the professional competence of some of the people she dealt with, which Collier never does; and Quinn also brings to light the amorous inclinations of one producer, again quite damagingly.)

But like Collier, Sally Quinn does not neglect the. . . how to put it delicately? . . . tiny details. She tells us, for instance, just where she was taken to lunch, and by whom. "Where one is taken to lunch says a lot," she says. "If you want to take someone's temperature in the television world, you measure where they take you to lunch."

It is precisely her insouciant disregard for the status taboo that makes Sally Quinn an interesting writer, and

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for just that reason so many people tend to sigh and roll their eyes and tsk their tongues when her name is mentioned. At times she even seems to take a perverse pleasure in it:

"Social climbing and power climbing—the two are often synonymous—are what make Washington run. To understand a society it is essential to understand how people climb. If there are more than two people together, if there are three, one of them is climbing."

She talks about Washington embassy parties, and how "everybody hates them because they are truly boring." But then she says: "But I loved them because everybody in Washington goes to these horrible events at one time or another, and so I used them as a sort of training ground to meet and talk to and observe the famous and powerful people who make the town move."

Here's one I like: "Reporters had been anathema to me, after my father's experience in Germany [Lt. Gen. William Quinn had been depicted by CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr as a political ally of Goldwater], and I was not only suspicious of them but felt that they were socially inferior. Once, at a dinner at the German ambassador's in Bonn, I was seated next to the *New York Times* correspondent and felt terribly insulted."

She says that "those in power in Washington understand perfectly how much good or damage a write-up in the social section can do. . . . " When covering a party she advises that the best thing is to "find the most important powerful person in the room and stick close. . . . You'll get the best quotes, and you won't miss any from the star." But only stick close to this person until "someone more powerful comes in."

In working for *The Washington Post*'s "Style" section, Sally Quinn made quite an interesting discovery about social coverage, as Tom Wolfe had, too: it doesn't have to be favorable. "I had learned that most people weren't interested in reading puff pieces," she says. "Even if they were outraged by the truth, they continued to read." And, of course, the best thing of all was to try to show, by quotation or use of status detail, precisely how certain people were "climbing" and thereby attaining power. Sally Quinn says that she loved every minute of it once she "got over the shock of being publicly denounced and snubbed and of receiving hate mail. . . . "

Both Collier and Quinn, then, have violated the status taboo (although Quinn much more conspicuously in her *Washington Post* "Style" pieces than in her book), and as a result a predictable outcry arose from the press. And it was predictable mainly because it had been heard so many times in the past.

'Gross Gossipation'

It is, for example, "weird" to read of the contemporary reception accorded to Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. The very same objections were raised. Boswell was thought to have harmed Dr. Johnson by reporting some unflattering observations about him. One critic referred to Boswell's "gross gossipation," and added that Boswell, who for a while was shunned by polite society after the book came out, "deserves what he daily meets with—that of people shutting their doors against him as they would against any other wild Beast." No doubt he got hate mail, no doubt someone called it "toilet bowl journalism."

Another critic of the book wrote: "A great character, in worthy situations, is an object of virtuous contemplation, but that minuteness of anecdote, that ostentatious display of trifles, which we sometimes meet with, is a vicious indulgence of inquisitive impertinence; a flagrant breach of private confidence, and an infringement of the rules of good breeding." Thomas Babington Macaulay later came out with an assessment of Boswell's character that makes anything written about Barney Collier pale by

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comparison. (Sample sentence: "Everything which another man would have hidden, every thing the publication of which would have made another man hang himself, was matter of gay and clamorous exultation to his weak and diseased mind." And on like this for 20 pages.)

I don't want to suggest that Barney Collier has written another *Life of Johnson*, but there is quite a strong sense of *deja vu* about the criticism.

Illuminating the Target

The same has been true of our other contemporary "gossip" writers, of course. When Tom Wolfe began writing about status life in the mid-sixties, including as an important part of his technique such details as dress, manners, the patois, the ambience, he was dismissed as a gossip writer. *The New York Review* duly fired off gigantic salvos at him which seemed to have been lifted directly out of the *Quarterly Review*'s attacks on the new novels that were being eagerly read in the early 1800s. (And in just the same way, *The New York Review*'s fireworks exploded harmlessly overhead, serving merely to illuminate the target.)

When Truman Capote published *In Cold Blood*, F. W. Dupee grew very alarmed, worrying whether it was "parajournalism" (which would have been bad), and he worried, too, that the "documentation is, for the most part, suppressed." From the moment it came out, literary types had worried about how Boswell got the conversation down, too, since he took no notes in public. Nor did Truman Capote. Nor did. . . well, I won't go on.

I will simply say that when I read that someone has been dismissed as a writer of gossip, my inclination is to go out and buy the book. It tells me that the author is writing about "the way we live now," not merely about what a source on Capitol Hill said this morning about the leak of the week from the subcommittee of the month.

In this sense, then, the "Style" section of *The Washington Post* has filled a big gap in recent years, and for that reason it is more likely to be of interest to historians than the *Post*'s front page, because it tells us something about manners in the nation's capital. This will surely be of greater interest than the day-to-day unfolding of those public events which to us, today, seem "newsworthy." (Some people believe that the advertisements will tell the most about our society, however, and they may be right. Researchers looking through old newspapers have already found this to be the case on a number of occasions.)

Of late, unfortunately, the "Style" section has been behaving itself. Sally Quinn appears to have been neutralized, to a large extent, and there seem to be no effective replacements, despite a huge reportorial staff. Quinn, alas, *did* become a star, which has not helped her reporting. She notes at one point that she "began to be seen as a personality rather than just another reporter" without seeming to appreciate the danger therein.

Status detail and what is currently called gossip is of interest to historians, but it is also of interest right now. For one thing, as Sally Quinn has so unkindly reminded us, it illuminates social climbing, and thus also illuminates the routes to power, in many cases. But more than that, it tells us so much about the person or people concerned. "It's just so fundamental to everything people do," Tom Wolfe has remarked.

David Halberstam, in his recent *Atlantic* article on CBS, illuminates the character of chairman of the board William Paley with material that, had it come from a lesser pen, might have been dubbed gossip. Timothy Crouse, to give him his due, doesn't entirely fall into the Apple Source trap and gives us some perhaps more illuminating anecdotes, including one about Johnny Apple himself. (Apple tells Halberstam in the *Times* newsroom, "Say, I was over at Peter and Ellen Straus's—you know, Punch's

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favorite cousin—last night, and Harding Bancroft [vice president of the *Times*] was there, and your name came up and I thought you'd be pleased—it was very favorably commented upon.")

Tom Wicker, an associate editor of *The New York Times*, tells us something about himself in his book on the Attica prison riot when he says that he "envies" William Kunstler, the radical lawyer, for being more to the left than he, but he tells us more when he describes the scene in the *National Geographic* dining room, with prominent guests whose names fill a paragraph. Here Wicker "always studied Franc Shor's wine choices with care, and was perennially surprised to find himself able to hold up his end of the conversation, and even on occasion to bring the table to his point of view . . . . it was not only in the executive dining room of the *Geographic* that he sometimes had a vivid sense of having come a long, long way."

Burned Source

The use of status detail and direct quotation ("gossip") to illuminate a discrepancy between radical philosophy and elitist life style is particularly telling, of course, and in a way one admires Wicker for so candidly laying his cards on the table; Tom Wolfe gave Leonard Bernstein the same treatment, as is well known, and a related case cropped up not long ago in Washington, when Sally Quinn reported that the wife of an assistant secretary of state, who was in charge of a local Vietnamese refugee program, was "placing" the refugees with her friends as maids.

I think it's true to say that the whole subject of status is particularly threatening—and therefore particularly taboo—among those who are actively engaged in climbing the social rungs, or among those who find themselves in a relatively elevated, but nevertheless precarious social position. In America generally there is so much social mobility that it is not surprising to find a fairly strong status taboo, but among journalists in particular there is good reason for the taboo to be particularly strong. They are, after all, an emerging elite. They have come a long way, surely, in the ten years or so since Sally Quinn felt "terribly insulted" sitting next to a *Times*man. It's hard to see how she could feel that way today. Journalists are our superstars, let's not forget.

It is just such social newcomers, of course, who are inclined most rigidly to enforce the status taboo, and who are most upset, therefore, by the rude scrutiny of a Barney Collier. It is not just that there is a danger, as in the Wicker case, of pointing out a discrepancy between egalitarian philosophy and elitist life style, although this would not be difficult with many eminent journalists today, including, very possibly, one or two of those who have publicly denounced Collier's book. It is worse than that, because when status itself is examined, there is an obvious threat to the journalist who is a writer in name, but whose writings are usually doomed to instant oblivion; who is a policy maker at heart, but is not in charge of policy; who dare not burn his source, nor give us honey; who is clothed in status, but has little else to wear.

The furor over the Collier book brings to mind, once again, *The Quarterly Review*, which in 1832 railed against the then eagerly read "Novels of Fashionable Life," and concluded by pointing the finger of blame at those "members of the aristocracy [who] have themselves come forward to inform against their fraternity, showing themselves ambitious of a kind of distinction."

But the novel fad could not last, the *Review* reassured itself. The damnable books were "widely circulated," but "this whole branch of bookselling cannot last long. But with many simple persons a mystery has been revealed, and a charm has been broken, and they will never again have the same respect for the Great which they once had." ■

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National Economic Planning: Must It Be Orwellian?

by David Ignatius

"It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions. . . . Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig iron and the overfulfillment of the Ninth Three Year Plan."

People tend to have rather strong feelings about economic planning. To opponents, it connotes totalitarian regimentation and inefficiency: the Ministry of Plenty in Orwell's *1984* babbling nonsensically about pig iron; incompetent commissars in the Soviet Union producing millions of left shoes and no right shoes because someone at *Gosplan* misplaced a page of the National Plan.

To supporters, on the other hand, planning is the painless cure-all to every economic problem, so perfectly *rational* that only parochial politics and stupidity could have prevented it from taking hold in the United States. Senator Hubert Humphrey, a planning booster, observes in horror and astonishment: "The United States government is the last bastion of unplanned activity in the world."

With Senator Jacob Javits, Humphrey has introduced a bill which should sharpen the planning debate considerably. Titled *The Balanced Growth and Economic Planning Act*, the Humphrey-Javits bill is the first attempt since the 1930s to give polite legislative discussion to a comprehensive planning scheme. In what follows, I will offer an unsentimental evaluation of the bill, hoping to show that it is neither as sweetly reasonable and unobtrusive as the advocates imply, nor as monolithic and wasteful as its opponents claim.

Briefly, here is what the Humphrey-Javits bill proposes to do to restructure economic policy-making: It would create within the Executive branch a three-member Planning Board with a staff of 500 and an annual budget of $50 million. The Board's job would be to formulate a National Economic Plan for the

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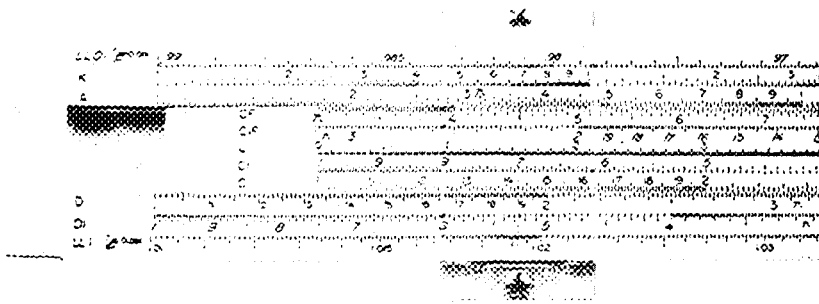
planning period (unspecified in the bill, but usually assumed to be four or six years). The Plan would include a forecast of production and investment over the period; a statement of economic objectives; and a list of legislative recommendations necessary to achieve those objectives. The Board's draft Plan would be reviewed by a Council of Economic Planning, composed of all Cabinet members and others in the Executive branch with major economic responsibilities, such as the Chairman of the Federal Reserve. (The reader may note a slightly tedious aspect to this narrative. In this respect, I hardly do justice to the utter tedium of the bill itself.) The Council's role would be consultative: the Secretary of Transportation, for example, would examine the Plan to make sure it contained sound targets for transportation policy. After the Council had approved the entire Plan, the President would submit it to Congress for extensive review. Once approved, it would stand as the country's economic blueprint for the duration of the planning period. Any new economic or social programs would have to be justified in terms of their effects on the overall Plan and its targets.

This not only sounds sweetly reasonable, it sounds soporific, and that is my quarrel with the advocates of *The Balanced Growth and Economic Planning Act*. They are trying to slip something past us. Through gratuitous allusions to Alexander Hamilton, Albert Gallatin, Andrew Jackson, and other historical notables as "planners," and by their repeated use of such simplistic analogies as "every family knows it needs to *plan* its expenditures," the Humphrey-Javits forces attempt to make planning sound as American as... well, free enterprise. Which it isn't.

The real trouble with the Humphrey-Javits bill is that it is dishonest, or at least disingenuous, on the question of bureaucratic control—the 1984 factor. In an effort to quell the traditional fear that planning would lead to regimentation and loss of freedom, Humphrey and others promoting the bill habitually refer to their scheme as "democratic planning." The modification of the noun "planning" by the adjective "democratic" is meant to imply that the community will participate at each stage with the planners in formulating and implementing national goals. The process will be, at the same time, centralized and decentralized.



The grammatical juxtaposition of basically opposed concepts like "democratic" and "planning" is a useful device. One might speak, in a similar way, about "Christian racism," or "humane torture," or "earnest mirth" and presumably mean *something* by it. In his famous essay, "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell noted that the word "democratic" is especially liable to this sort of manipulation: "It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy.... Words of this kind are

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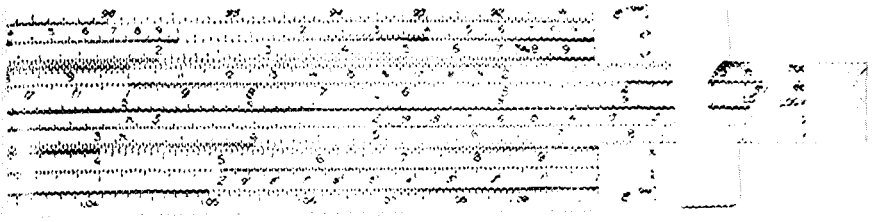
often used in a consciously dishonest way.

So too with the phrase "democratic planning." The intended deception is that we accept the planners' contention that increased central control of the economy can be gained without a loss of liberty by some individuals. To be fair, the friends of planning seem to have deceived themselves on this point as a pre-condition to deceiving the rest of us. Humphrey and Javits have taken pains to build an elaborate system of checks and balances into their bill. The National Plan, after being deliberated by all members of the Cabinet and approved by the President, is to be sent to Congress for review and modification within 105 days. "Citizen" groups can also intervene to protest aspects of the Plan which trouble them. It then goes back to the President for further modification; then back to Congress again, which would "approve or disapprove, in whole or in part, the revised Plan."

This is certainly democratic, but it is also likely to prove utterly paralyzing in a non-parliamentary system like ours. To see why, we need only consider the events of the last two years, as Congress and the Executive tried jointly to work out a rudimentary "plan" for energy consumption and development. As any reader of the newspapers knows, that plan was an almost laughable exercise in futility and frustration. The Ford Administration did its best to protect the energy industry. Congress struggled to protect other well-represented interests. The bill that finally emerged, after incredible delay, was not really a plan at all, but an index of the relative strengths of various organized interest groups in the United States.

The country managed to get through the last two "Energy Crisis" years only because "planning" was being done outside government, by the oil companies. Efficient public sector planning would have been infinitely preferable, but the buffooneries of our democratic system in action prevented a coherent plan from taking shape.



Penelope Breese

The whole point about planning is that it is supposed to break through this kind of bureaucratic and political logjam. To state the matter boldly: A technical elite of planners comes up with what it believes to be sound answers to economic questions and then uses the machinery of the state to impose these solutions on an inevitably recalcitrant society. Without this elitist aspect, and the force of coercion, planning makes little sense.

Clearly, then, the fears of conservatives that planning will restrict individual freedom are not groundless, especially if the individuals involved happen to be corporation presidents or labor leaders. In a planned economy (of a progressive political complexion), a corporation would not be free to use scarce capital resources to produce doggy diapers or foot deodorants for the affluent if there was a shortage of housing for the poor. Similarly, labor unions would not be free to bid up the wages of organized workers if that would result in inflation and a worsening of living stand-

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ards for unorganized workers and people on fixed incomes.

There is, however, one aspect of planning which ought to tantalize conservatives: it might restrict the freedom of do-gooder liberals to expand the government bureaucracy. If bureaucracies have to justify to the planners every existing program and job in the federal government, there is some chance that big government could actually be reduced.

On the simplest level, the problem of mushrooming social spending has been one of data collection. In a 1965 study, a researcher named Albert Biderman found that for 44 new "national goals" enunciated by the 1960 President's Commission on National Goals (such as "increase the number of junior colleges," "increase construction of low-income houses and apartments"), there were statistical records of past performance available in only 25 per cent of the cases. This meant that even if the government had decided to make a disciplined effort to improve housing in the cities, it would have had no way to measure its progress, or to compare the method chosen to other possible approaches. In recent years, there has been some effort to improve collection and analysis of data, through regular publication of a volume entitled *Social Indicators*. But this project reeks of "planning," so there has been little money for it. The last time I checked, the Office of Management and Budget had one and one-half full-time staffers working to compile the upcoming edition of *Social Indicators*. By comparison with other countries, where public sector planning is not so starved of talent and money, our data collection is shockingly bad.

'Corporatism'

A look at planning systems around the world clarifies the choices we will face in this country if we ever decide to get serious about planning.

First, the unfortunate fact is that "democratic planning" in practice has usually ended up reinforcing corporate power and producing a version of the "corporatist" state. To facilitate consensus, corporations (and to a lesser extent, labor unions) are brought into the planning process. The largest and best-organized interests gradually develop a symbiotic relationship with the planning elite. All large corporations become, in effect, state corporations: encouraged and aided by the state, sharing the state's priorities, working with the state to thwart foreign competitors. The system recalls the old Salazarist slogan: "Everything for the state; nothing against the state."

This sort of "consensus" planning tends to work especially well in countries which have had the historical experience of fascism, like France and Japan. In France, for example, postwar national planning was largely an extension of the economic methods of the Vichy government. The French badly needed economic discipline after the war, and the first French National Plan, from 1946 to 1953 succeeded in mobilizing resources for rapid rebuilding of French industry. Planners concentrated on allocating resources to those sectors where investment was most needed and would produce the highest return.

Since then, there have been six more French National Plans. The latest, to be implemented this year, is less oriented toward investment than some previous ones, but retains many of the same features. The planners, after consulting with the larger corporations, set "indicative" targets for output, employment, investment, product development, imports, exports, and income distribution. For the most part, these merely aggregate and endorse the separate planning targets of the various firms. Where there is divergence between the plans of the firms and that of the government, negotiations take place in an attempt to reach a compromise.

Compromise is usually possible, given the basic identity of interests between government economic managers and corporate economic

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managers. Both tend to favor high growth, investment, and exports. More important are the cultural factors which make the French "indicative" approach work. The French government historically has been highly centralized, with a national administrative elite educated at special, state-run schools. Today, both the planners and the corporate managers tend to be drawn from these schools, where they have developed friendships and common goals. In addition, the French have no tradition of antitrust. Cartels are encouraged, on the assumption that they are more efficient, more stable, and more adept at planning. As John Sheahan noted in a survey of French planning in *Challenge* magazine: "If ITT was a French corporation, the Planning Commission would be its natural ally."

Soviet Planning

In communist countries, planning can, of course, be implemented without any semblance of democratic consent. Even so, in recent years Soviet planning has moved closer to the Western European type, giving credence to the theory that the world's economic systems are converging.

In the old days, before Khrushchev and de-Stalinization, the planning process was monolithic and its implementation totalitarian. Six to eight months before the beginning of every plan year, the Planning Commission would prepare a "preliminary balance" for the entire economy and send "control figures" on inputs and outputs to each industrial ministry. These targets were then passed on to the various state-owned enterprises, whose managers were instructed to stick to the "plan," using the specified materials to produce the specified output. Managers would be rewarded with bonuses if they produced more than the planned targets and demoted (or worse) if they produced less. It was an entirely top-down system, unresponsive to consumer sentiment, and the goods often sat on shelves for lack of demand.

Since 1956, the Soviet planning process has been improved considerably. The big change came in 1965, when Premier Alexei Kosygin announced a series of economic reforms which decentralized planning and gave much more latitude to the individual enterprise. Today, the central planning authorities specify only the volume of final output they want and the total wages bill, leaving the firm to decide on the most efficient production techniques, to contract for its raw materials, and to hire its workers. More important, the two key features of capitalism—prices and profits—are becoming part of the Soviet system. "Shadow prices" attempt to duplicate the market prices of a corporate economy. And the "surplus" of a state enterprise measures its efficiency in much the same way that a firm's profit does in the West.

Thanks to the planning reforms, the oppressive aspect of life in Budapest (where I found myself last summer) is no longer inefficient services and poor quality products. It is now the same as in New York or London: extreme inequality. Where the Hungarian workers still wear drab proletarian costumes and ride the streetcar, the political and managerial elite wear elegant Italian clothes and drive around in fast automobiles. "Consulting," by the way, is a favorite means for members of the elite, especially professors, to augment their incomes. As the power of the Eastern European technocrats grows, the inequality of the class system is likely to become even more pronounced.

Stubborn America

While the rest of the world happily converges toward the planned corporatist economy, the United States remains something of an anomaly. Our economy may already be largely planned by a technocratic elite of corporate managers. But the electorate has thus far refused to allow the final step: full integration of corporate planning and the government.

From the experience of other

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countries, we can be sure that planning is no panacea. Efficiency and order imposed by planners (communist or non-communist) have dangers of their own, and some may find the patchwork, unplanned system that has developed in the United States preferable to a more rationalized system. For the very inefficiency of the system—the sort of absurdities detailed each month in this magazine's "Tidbits and Outrages" section—acts as a check against totalitarian control.

But we pay a price for our refusal to plan. By comparison with leading European countries, our economy is highly unstable, our unemployment rate very high, our investment low, our growth sluggish, our exploitation of natural resources anarchic. What is more important, we have all of the vices of big government and none of the virtues. As one economist predicted in the 1930s, the New Deal brand of limited intervention in the market has led to "an impairment of the efficiency of the competitive system without the compensating benefits of rationalized collective action."

Three Questions

There are three hard questions that we must confront if we decide that we are willing to consider planning in the United States: Who should do the planning? What should the planners focus on? How far should they be allowed to dictate to the rest of us?

On the first two questions—who should plan and what should they do?—I have to take what will sound like an elitist view. The planners should be the smartest and most principled public officials in the country. To some, this may sound like a dismal throwback to the early 1960s. Because one group called "the best and the brightest" clearly failed, the idea has crept into our thinking that we shouldn't seek the best and the brightest for public service. We should. We may need better criteria for selecting them, but they are the only ones who can make planning work.

I have real doubts about whether the Congress and the public can play a meaningful role—of the sort sketched in the Humphrey-Javits bill—in the process of setting targets and deciding what is the most effective way to achieve them. In an interview, Humphrey has explained the kinds of questions he hopes "democratic planning" will tackle: "How much urbanization does society really want? What do we consider to be the optimum size of the city? What population levels can give us the best in terms of cost-effectiveness programs and living conditions? *Surely we can find out.*" (my emphasis)

If by this "we " Humphrey means the general public, he is deluding himself. How in the world is the citizen supposed to be able to say something useful on "the optimum size of the city"? He can say whether he likes the size of the city he lives in, and if not, why not. But unless he's lived in a dozen different-sized cities, he's unlikely to know much about which size is "best." But presumably by "we " Humphrey doesn't mean the citizen at all, but an elite of technocrats, who can study the problems in a more detached, scientific way. I'm not sure they can answer all of Humphrey's sample questions, which raise issues which are not technical at all, but instead require value judgments about what makes for the good life. Planners are no better qualified to decide this than anyone else. But there *are* questions which the planners can solve.

The planners must focus on problems which can be easily quantified. What is the rate of depletion of key resources and what is the most cost-effective use of them? Where are there supply bottlenecks in the economy and how can they be removed? What areas of the economy are starved of investment and what areas are choking from over-development? Where is technology not being adequately developed by the private market and could a public corporation do a more

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efficient job? What would be the economic costs and benefits of reducing automobile production? In what new ways could we use the resources freed by such a reduction?

Economic planners could give good answers to these questions. But I am not proposing them as a theocratic priesthood which will make *all* decisions. Congress and the public must set the overall political context in which the planners do their problem-solving. The political issues will be, in every way, more difficult and important than the technical ones: How much equality do we want in income distribution? How much inflation and unemployment are we willing to tolerate? Are we willing to trade rapid economic growth for improved environmental quality? While one cannot be altogether confident that these issues can be resolved through the political process, the alternative—a value-judging elite to decide them for us—is clearly intolerable.

The final question—what coercive powers should the planners have?—is the most vexing one. The challenges we are likely to face in the future are so difficult, and will require such discipline from society, that an argument can surely be made that, for our own good, we should surrender all power to the planners. Robert Heilbroner has argued the logic of this in his gloomy *Inquiry into the Human Prospect.* I must admit my doubt that a life in total service to Heilbroner's supremely rational, species-preserving planning elite would be worth living.

Planners shouldn't be dictators, then. But they should have considerable power—enough that they don't have to run every decision through a bureaucratic and congressional gauntlet, where it would likely be beaten to a pulp by an endless line of interest groups. *But,* because they will have so much power, planners should be quickly and easily dismissable if the electorate, through its congressional representatives, disagrees fundamentally with what they're doing.

In this framework, planners should have the right to abridge certain economic freedoms. If the planners can show that it is socially inefficient and environmentally dangerous to build another steel mill in Gary, Indiana, then they should have the power to stop it—and if no private firm is willing, the power to charter a public corporation to build a plant where it *would* be safe and efficient. If the planners can show that private automobile travel is inefficient and environmentally dangerous, they should have the power to restrict investment in new automobile plants. If the planners can show that the number of satisfactory low-income housing units is declining over time, they should have the power to mobilize resources to build new houses.

Essential Freedoms

As for political freedom, there is absolutely no reason for abridging it in a mature, literate, reasonably cohesive society like ours, with 200 years of success as a democracy. The democratic liberties guaranteed in our bill of rights must remain privileged. So too must entrepreneurial freedom. An individual who commands his own labor power is different from a corporation president who commands that of many thousands. Where we can see why society may wish to restrict the corporation president's range of official action, there is no such justification for limiting an individual or a small group. People should be free (indeed, encouraged) to start new enterprises. The entrepreneur should come under public control only if his business becomes a giant, with the power to threaten the lives of others.

The Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal has noted the way in which planning might actually increase our freedom as individuals: ". . . You have government controls of all sorts over your private lives, and still you are proud of having no planning. If you had more planning for the big things in society, then you wouldn't have to interfere with individuals' actions." ■

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hypnotism, modern dance, meditation, Silva Mind Control, Arica, acupuncture, sex therapy, Reichian therapy. . . ." The list goes on, but you get the idea: Jerry Rubin, 1970s-version, is as much of a jerk as ever.

Jackie and Ari. Lester David, Jhan Robbins. Pocket Books, $1.95. Here's a good example of "gossip" that does not illuminate. In a description of the yacht *Christina,* for example, we learn that "Charlie the bartender is busy. Charlie is a fixture on the *Christina*, and his martinis are famous among the Beautiful People. He concocts them of four-and-one-half parts gin to seven-eighths of a part of vermouth. Those who have tasted them pronounce Charlie's martinis the world's finest."

Jackie and Ari and his yacht and their martinis tell us so little precisely because he was so rich and therefore so removed from the everyday world—removed into the world of almost pure fantasy. The same criticism can be made of much of the social coverage in Washington—parties at the Iranian embassy, for example. They do not impinge on the real world any more than life on Ari's yacht does. For that reason, of course, these accounts tend to have a widespread "escapist" appeal, but they tell us very little about our society.

Living with Terrorism. Richard Clutterbuck. Arlington House, $7.95.

Mediterranean Europe and the Common Market: Studies of Economic Growth and Integration. Eric N. Baklanoff, ed. Univ. of Alabama Press, $14.50.

Nightmare: The Underside of the Nixon Years. J. Anthony Lukas. Viking, $15. This history of Watergate is mostly familiar stuff, but you would need to read at least a dozen other books to find all the material Lukas has brought together here. Familiarity makes it tepid reading now, but completeness will make it an indispensable reference in the future.

The Party's Choice. William R. Keech, Donald R. Matthews. Brookings. A valuable history of and commentary upon the presidential nominating process. Almost all the material concerns the period since 1936.

Peacemaking: A Guide to Conflict Resolution for Indviduals, Groups and Nations. Barbara Stanford, ed. Bantam Books, $1.95. A pointless and tedious compilation, which seems to be based on the dubious premise that if only we can have a "dialogue" of high-minded nature on the solemn issues of the day, our problems will eventually disappear. Peace does not prevail not because we are unfamiliar with "peacemaking techniques" or a "definition of peace" or the nature of "interpersonal conflicts," but because human beings are not as sweetly reasonable as the authors of this book.

Police Reform in the United States: The Era of August Vollmer, 1905-1932. Gene E. Carte, Elaine H. Carte. Univ. of Caifornia Press.

The Politics of Adoption. Mary Kathleen Benet. Praeger, $8.95.

Premise for Propaganda: The United States Information Agency's Operating Assumptions in the Cold War. Leo Bogart. Free Press, $12.95.

The Rape of Inez Garcia. Jim Wood. Putnam, $7.95.

The Strength in Us: Self-Help Groups in the Modern World. Alfred H. Katz, Alfred I. Bender. New Viewpoints, $12.50/6.95.

Thunder in the Rockies: The Incredible Denver Post. Bill Hosokawa. Morrow, $12.95.

Today and Tomorrow in America. Martin Mayer. Harper & Row, $8.95.

The TV-Guided American. Arthur Asa Berger. Walker, $7.95.

The United States Marines: The First Two Hundred Years, 1775-1975. Brig. Gen. Edwin Simmons, USMC Ret. Viking, $8.95.

The Watcher and the Watched. Bruno M. Cormier, M.D. Scribners/Tundra, $10.

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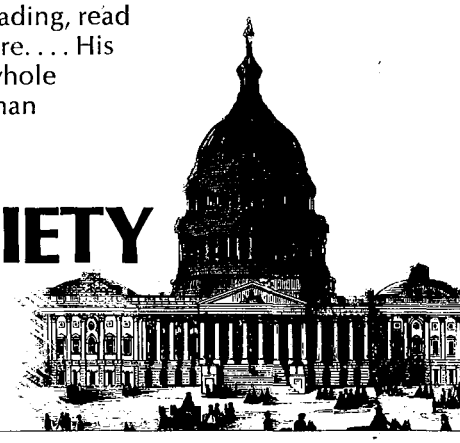

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